S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Saviours Of Islamic Spirit

Vol. I

Caliph 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Aziz

Hasan al-Basri

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal

Imam Abul Hasan al-Ashari

Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali

Sheikh 'Abdul Qadir Jilani

Hafiz Ibn al-Jawzi

Sultan Salah ud-din 'Ayyubi

Sheikh ul-Islam 'Izz ud-din

Maulana Jalal ud-din Rumi

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The first part of the *Tarikh-i-Da'wat-o-'Azeemat* was originally published in 1955 by Darul Musannefin, Azamgarh. Thereafter a revised and enlarged edition was brought out in 1969 by the Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, Lucknow. In the meantime its Arabic version entitled *Rijal ul-Fikr wad-Da'wah fil-Islam* was brought out thrice from Damascus and Kuwait in 1960, 1965 and 1969. In January 1970 the author asked me to render the work in English so that the splendid intellectual heritage of Islam and the heroic efforts made by our savants, saints and warriors for the revival of the true Faith throughout the ages, could be made known to a wider circle in the language of today. In attempting this translation I have tried to follow the original text, as far as possible, but have departed from a literal rendering, wherever necessary, and have added a number of footnotes alongwith the bibliography, glossary, etc However, as the author has been kind enough to go through the manuscript, the translation can be treated as a faithful rendering having the approval of the author.

I have the greatest pleasure in acknowledging my gratitude to Mr. Abrar Ahmad Khan who took the trouble of going through the manuscript and giving some very helpful suggestions. Likewise, I have greatly benefited from the labour put in by Mr. Muhammad Ghayas Uddin in checking the original references which was really a difficult and tiresome job. My thanks are also due to Mr. S. Maqbool Ahmad, Mr. Wali Ullah and a few other friends who ungrudgingly extended their help in the preparation of the manuscript, printing, etc.

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MOHIUDDIN AHMAD

TRANSLITERATION

The dashes to mark the long vowels. ā as in 'far', ū as in 'loose'; ī as in 'mean' have been retained, leaving other conventional signs Two more signs, ' and ' representing the Arabic *ain* and *hamza* have also been retained The sounds of k and dj used in the Encyclopædia of Islam have been replaced by q and j respectively, which are now in common use Where the two consonants—*ch*, *dh*, *gh*, *kh*, *sh*, and *th*—have been used, these are to be sounded together, as, for example, *ch* in 'church', *sh* in 'ship' and *th* in 'think'. The sound of *gh* resembles *gz* as in 'exact', that of *kh* is like *ch* in Scottish *loch* or the German *ach* and *dh* gives the sound *th* in 'father' Wherever the two consonants are desired to give their own sounds separately, an apostrophe has been inserted in between as, for example, in *Ad'ham*, *Is'haq*, etc.

However, where any Arabic word is in common use in English (as, Cadi) or its pronunciation is known to the English-speaking people (as, Ghazali) no signs have been used

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PREFACE

A study circle formed under the name of "Jamā'at-i-Dā'wat-o-Tabligh" organised a series of lectures at Lucknow in Muharram, 1372 A H., on certain important topics for the benefit of its members and others interested in academic and cultural advancement. The subject allotted to me for the discourse was "the History of Religious Preaching and the Revivalist Movement." The disquisition continued throughout the week I had then jotted down some points as an aide-memoire for delivering these lectures but some of the listeners took down notes which were later on shown to me for publication of the discourse. I then realised that the subject required a detailed treatment as no exhaustive and complete dissertation on this important topic of Islamic history existed It represented a serious gap in the Islamic literature which had to be filled in. The absence of any work on this subject has produced a misconceived notion even amongst the enlightened circles that the attempts for renovation and renaissance of the Muslim peoples were made from time to time but no continuous attempt at rejuvenating the *Millat* could be looked for in the annals of Islamic history. It is commonly held that Islam did produce towering personalities who possessed a rocking capacity to struggle against the order of the day but barring a few luminaries who were born after centuries, the reformers, leaders, and the *'ulema* produced by Islam in the past were of no higher calibre than those born during its age of decadence, and they had hardly any intellectual or academic contribution to their credit It is erroneously thought that only seven or eight outstanding personages could be claimed as an exception to the barren and unproductive era of Islamic intellectual history.

The ignorance in this regard may not appear to be striking but it has nevertheless its far-reaching consequences This concept produces a sense of despondency and a sickening atmosphere.

It dashes all hopes in the innate vitality of Islam which has always produced men of redoubtable courage and conviction as cannot be found amongst any other people There is thus absolutely no ground for any pessimism and despondency in Islam on this score.

The inference drawn by certain people in this regard is, however, not without a cause Unfortunately we find either a glossary of events with Kings and Emperors as the central figures or biographical accounts of certain eminent lumanaries in the vast treasure of Islamic literature but no account of the revivalist movement or intellectual history of the Muslim peoples encompassing the academic and speculative achievements of all those savants who have left an indelible mark on the world of Islam These scholars have relentlessly fought against the forces of corruption, defended the Islamic precepts and teachings and rejuvenated the spirit of Islamic revival besides making valuable contributions to the intellectual and academic treasure of their people In fact there is no gap at all in the intellectual history of Islam, it is only in the presentation of the history of its peoples, which needs urgently to be filled in A history of religious revival and preaching in Islam would also be an account of the intellectual and academic movements which have seen successive ebbs and flows of Islamic reawakening in the past

However, when the task was taken up, it was realised that an article or a small treatise will not do justice to the subject It would be necessary to wade through the entire historical literature along with the available works on biography, arts and sciences, translations, etc, and re-evaluate and compile the available material in a particular manner The leisure required for undertaking a task of this magnitude has never been available to the author, but as the crying need for such a volume impelled me take up the work, it was not possible for me to write these pages without going through all the available source material

It might be made clear that my purpose is neither to explain what is meant by revival nor to name the few outstanding personalities who are commonly known as revivalists (*mujaddids*) but to

present an account of the continuous effort made during the past thirteen hundred years for stimulating a spirit of reawakening among the Muslims, and bring into light those eminent savants who rose to the defence of Islam in order to arrest the onslaught of the evil forces, gave birth to various movements for upholding the Islamic morals and values and, finally, whose efforts made it possible for Islam to survive to this day. I would mention several persons in this treatise who cannot be called as *mujaddids* but who had worked for the renovation and regeneration of Islamic faith and practice and the subsequent generations of Muslims have ever remained indebted to them.

In writing these volumes the following points have been kept in view :

(1) For presenting the view-point of any particular person or a movement started by him, his own writings or sayings have been relied upon. If these have been found inadequate, only then help has been taken from the writings or descriptions left by his friends, contemporaries and pupils. In the latter case more reliable and authentic sources have been given preference without placing undue reliance on those writers who were nearer to him in time ; trustworthy material has been used wherever it could be found, after careful verification of the facts

(2) In portraying the biographical sketches and character of the personalities mentioned, light has been shed on the intellectual, cultural and academic temperament of the *time* in order to make a correct assessment of the achievement of the personage concerned in its true perspective. It is necessary to cast a glance on the then prevailing situation before a place could be assigned to any individual in history. Assessment of any character, out of its own context of time and place, according to modern concepts and values might appear to be a work of critical study, but there can hardly be anything more unjust to the personality so evaluated. The success or

failure of any individual can only be judged in the background of the conditions in which he has had an opportunity to strive for a cause, otherwise, the greatest and most eminent person can be depicted as a complete failure in the light of changed circumstances and according to the likes and dislikes of later historians. In fact, no historical figure, Islamic or otherwise, can claim a lasting recognition if it is viewed from a wrong angle.

(3) Presentation of a few short and sketchy extracts from the writings of any author or thinker hardly does any justice to him for the thought, message and call of the author cannot be presented in a few isolated passages, nor the reader can feel any intimacy with the author by going through small passages A bit lengthy extracts from the writings of important writers, reformers and thinkers have, therefore, been given so that the reader may himself be in a position to feel the impact of their message and make his own estimation of the personality he has been introduced. The writer of these pages has himself spent considerable time in going through the writings of these masters to feel the touch of the tenor and spirit of their call The reader can easily discern from these pages the attitude of the author towards these beacons of moral and spiritual guidance and for this I need not apologise to those who would want me to be dryly objective.

(4) I have not simply given extracts from the works of these masters but also tried to shed light on the priceless qualities of their head and heart, their endeavours to cultivate a living, all-pervading consciousness of the Almighty and, also, their moral excellence. The combination of consummate academic attainments with a burning desire to propitiate God and to earn His pleasure are the mark and symbol of these teachers of the old The readers of these pages can rightly claim

to be allowed to partake in the efflorescence of spirit and heart instead of simply gaining acquaintance with these men of letters

(5) The biographical sketches of historic personalities drawn out in these pages are not limited to a presentation of their achievements alone. Wherever their contemporaries or subsequent writers have criticised the ideas or writings of these persons, or an answer to such criticisms has been given, these have also been brought out but detractory and intemperate verdicts have not been included just to make this work appear more critical.

This is the first volume of this series Originally I had an idea of describing the achievements of Ibn Taymiyah also in this volume and thus wanted to finish it with an account of the first eight centuries after the *Hijrah*. However, Ibn Taymiyah and his attainments were found to be so epoch-making that an exhaustive study of his times and work had to accommodated in the second part of this work. The third and most probably the fourth part of the book would be devoted to the teachers of India who have been the fountainhead of call to religion and renovation of Islamic thought in the immediate past.

Lastly, the author has no hesitation in acknowledging the fact that the leisure, peace of mind and the wide study required for undertaking a stupendous task of this magnitude has not been available to him. Nevertheless, whatever was possible for him to do, is before the readers, and this too could not have been accomplished without the help and guidance from God Almighty.

"*There is no help save from Allah alone*".

Rae Bareli:
4th Rabi-ul-Awwal, 1374 A H.

ABUL HASAN ʿALI
Dairā Hazrat Shah ʿAlamullah

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

PROLOGUE

The Necessity of Reformation and Renovation and its continuity in Islamic History

Life is Ever Changing :

Islam is the last message of God Almighty; it has been presented in a complete form before the world, which has been told that :

> *"This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion AL-ISLAM".*
>
> (*Al-Mā'ida:3*)

On the one hand God has been well-pleased to favour mankind with a perfect and final religion ; on the other, the fact is that life is on the move, ever-changing and evolving as someone has aptly said .

> Life is ever youthful,
> Continuously on the move, zestful.

The religion bestowed by Omniscient God is grounded in a faith in eternal values and transcendental facts, yet, it is also zestful, perpetually moving and sufficing for the transformations of life. God has endowed His religion with the capacity to turn over a new leaf with the changes ringing the world and thus provide human beings with an uninterrupted guidance in every

phase of their life It can help humanity to find its way at every turn and pass. It is not a culture of any particular age or the architecture of a particular place preserved in the shape of archaeological remains, but a living faith, a masterpiece of ingenuity and craftsmanship of the omniscient and Wise Creater :

That is the measuring of the Mighty, the Wise.

(Ya Sin 38)

the doing of Allah Who perfecteth all things Lo ! He is Informed of what ye do

(An Namal 88)

Islamic Age—The Most Fast Changing Era :

In its being given as the last and universal religion, the *Ummah* of Islam had of necessity to be the last, widespread and universal brotherhood so that it may confront all the nations of the world at one time or the other and struggle against such odds as no other people have had to face It was, therefore, in the fitness of things that the time allocated to this *Ummah* should be so fast-moving and ever-changing as the world has not witnessed in its past history

Divine Arrangements for the Existence of Islam :

In order to enable the followers of Islam to meet the time-bound and extremely variable human needs changing according to circumstances, God has bestowed two things upon this *Ummah* First, the precepts and teachings of the Holy Prophet of Islam, Mohammad (may the peace of God be upon him), which can withstand all changes brought about by time and space, and solve all problems posed by the time-bound needs of humanity Secondly, the Lord has taken it upon Himself, and, indeed, history bears a testimony to the fact, that He shall always be raising such beacons of light and learning who will be translating the teachings and precepts of Islam into practical life and thus infusing a new life-blood into the veins of the *Ummah* for its march onwards This religion has been endowed with a peculiar capacity and vitality to produce such men of incomparably high character and

behaviour, as are not to be found in other nations. This is not merely fortuitous, but, in truth and reality, a fulfilment of the preordained arrangement made by God Almighty; for, the *Ummah* always did get a man of the same type and stature that it needed in a particular age

Attacks on Islam:

From the very inception of its career on this planet, Islam had been singled out for such fatal attacks as no other religion would have been able to withstand. There have been religions which had once conquered the then known world but they could not survive under an offensive much less serious than that Islam had to face Unlike others, Islam not only overcame all its adversaries but was also successful in maintaining its original form and purity. If, on the one hand, Assassins posed a grave internal danger for the faith and spirit of Islam, the onslaught of the Crusaders and the invasion of the Mongols, on the other, were sufficient to efface it completely. Had there been any other religion placed in such an inviable position as Islam, it would certainly have lost its soul and today we would have had to look for it in the pages of history. Islam, however, not only survived in the face of all these internal and external threats to its very existence, but was also able to gain victories in entirely new fields. Islam was continuously called upon to resist the onslaught of innovations, deviations and misguided interpretations of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, foreign traditions, heretical rites of the worship of saints, relics and tombs, speculative thought, materialism, epicureanism and godlessness, and, indeed, it sometimes appeared as if Islam would not be able to weather the storm, but the conscience of its followers always refused to strike a compromise with the evil, and Islam emerged triumphantly on each occasion. In every age, it produced a man of God who attacked these innovations and deviations with the full weight of unshakable conviction and restored the true spirit of the faith; reaffirmed the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet against the heretical rites, customs and foreign influences, propounded the teachings of Islam to

contradict speculative thought and materialistic precepts, raised the banner of revolt in the face of despots and emperors; condemned opulence, luxury and indolence of the rich and enunciated the teachings of Islam as the sole valid source of religious, moral and political advancement. They provided a new driving force, a new life to the Muslims of their time These scholars of impeccable worth and ability possessed the priceless gift of intellectual, moral and religious capabilities and were beacons of light for their contemporaries Each one of these was capable enough to expose the manifestations of the *Ignorance* of his age and to bring into light the correct and unalloyed teachings of Islam before the people. This is a clear evidence of the fact that God Almighty has decided to keep this religion alive so that it may ultimately provide guidance to the wayworn humanity. The fact of the matter is that God has ordained that the task entrusted earlier to the prophets and apostles will have to be accomplished by the followers of the last Prophet

Absence of Revivalists in other Faiths :

We find extremely few persons who have revived and renovated other religions The absence of such teachers for hundreds or rather thousands of years in other religions is striking enough. There has hardly been any renovator who could pull down the innovations and deviations which had found their way into other religions, restore the original purity, give a call to shed the accretions, decry the foreign elements, rites and customs, wage a war against the inroads of materialistic and pleasure-seeking ideas and enlighten the hearts of his co-religionists by his faith, true spiritualism and a personal example of ennobling sacrifice for his cause

Christianity can particularly be cited as a case in point It deviated from its path in the middle of its first century and deteriorated from a monotheistic faith to a polytheistic cult—such an early retrogression is not to be found elsewhere It became an admixture of the Greek and Buddhist religious thoughts, and, what is noteworthy, this happened through the hands of its greatest mentor and teacher, St Paul (10—65 A D). The transformation

was really from one world to another, changing its shape and content to such an extent that only the name and a few rites of the former could survive in the new religion. Ernest De Bunsen describes the mutilation undergone by Christianity in these words :

> "The doctrinal system recorded in the new Testament is not that which Jesus Christ has solemnly preached by word and deed. Not in Jesus, but in Paul, the Jewish and Christian dissenter, with his hidden wisdom, with his figurative interpretation of the Scriptures as being full of types and prophecies of future things, lies the principal reason for the existing dissension between Christians on the one side, and Jews and Mahomedans on the other. Following Stephen, the promulgator and developer of Essenic doctrines, Paul has brought the author of Christianity in connection with Buddhist tradition. Paul has laid the foundation to that amalgamation of antagonistic traditions which can be traced in the New Testament-Scriptures, and which has presented to the World an essentially non-historical image of Christ. Not Jesus, but Paul and the later gnostics have framed the principal doctrines which during eighteen centuries have been recognised as the foundation of orthodox Christianity[1]."

During all these years, and even today, Christendom has been treading the path shown by St Paul It could not produce a man who would have revolted against the antagonistic traditions which were made a part and parcel of Christianity by St. Paul. No body tried for centuries to bring back the religion of Jesus Christ to the point where the exalted teacher and his disciples had left it At last Martin Luther (1488—1546) raised the banner of Reformation in Germany in the sixteenth century, but even his effort was limited to certain specific issues; the movement did not aim at bringing back the Christendom to the teachings of Jesus Christ nor did it represent a revolt against the wrong direction

1 De Bunsen : p 128

that Christianity had been forced to adopt Thus Christianity could not produce any revolutionary, and, at the same time, a successful movement for its reformation for about fifteen centuries Christian scholars too admit the fact that no mentor or movement could manage to accomplish a reformation of Christianity during the first fifteen hundred years of its career

J. B Mullinger writes in his article on "Reformation" in Encyclopaedia Britannica :

> "If, however, we endeavour to assign the causes which prevented the Reformation from being carried even to but partial success long prior to the 16th century, we can have no difficulty in deciding that foremost among them must be placed the manner in which the medieval mind was fettered by a servile regard for precedant. To the men of the Middle ages, whether educated or uneducated, no measure of reform seemed defensible which appeared in the light of innovation" [1]

The same writer continues at another place in the same article

> "The complete failure of these successive efforts to bring about any comprehensive measure of church reform is a familiar fact in European history" [2]

And, again

> "Not a few, and some very memorable, efforts had been made before the 16th century to bring about a reformation of doctrine, but these had almost invariably been promptly visited with the censure of the church" [2]

After Martin Luther, no other person raised a voice against the senseless doctrines of the Church and papal supremacy, even to the limited extent that Luther did in the sixteenth century Christianity thus continued its journey uninterrupted on the path it was forced to tread At last, the Church lost the influence it wielded on the Christendom and gave place to crass materialism

1 E B R Vol XX, p 320
2 *Ibid*, p 321

The religion of the West today is nothing but materialism, yet, Christianity has been unable to bring forth a single individual who could have combated the evils of materialism, brought back the West to the fountain-head of true religion, restored faith in true Christianity and upheld the moral and spiritual values against utilitarian, pleasure-seeking norms of the present-day sensate culture Instead of accepting the challenge of the modern age and finding out solutions to the present problems within the religious view of life and the world, the West appears to have lost all hope in Christianity itself.

Almost the same story was repeated in the East also Hinduism lost its way by asundering its relation with the Creator of the Universe, giving up its simplicity and depriving itself of the moral and spiritual vitality. It became more an impracticable and complicated system of speculative thought by losing the chord of unalloyed monotheism and equality of mankind , for, these are the two basic tenets on which any religion can flourish, with its roots deep into the soul of man and branches providing shade and solace to the human beings

Upanishadic writers tried their level best to put a stop to this contamination by totally discarding the rituals that had gained a foothold into Hinduism, and replacing it by philosophical doctrines—a conceptual interpretation of the faith These elucidations being grounded in pantheistic monism or attaining unity through plurality were acclaimed in the literary and intellectual circles but the masses, who were intellectually at a lower level and yearned for rituals and practical manifestation of the monistic doctrines, remained unimpressed by the idealism of the *Upanishads*. The result was that Hinduism gradually lost its vitality; dis-satisfaction and incredulity gained ground and the revolt against the Brahmanic order found expression in Buddhism in the sixth century B C.

Buddha founded a new religion (if it can be so named, for Buddhism eliminated the concepts of Divinity, Hereafter and requital—the essential ingredients for any religion) which opposed the then prevalent caste system and Brahmanic ritual order, sought

annihilation of human misery through suppression of all desires—the will-to-live and will-to-possess—and commended moral behaviour, right mental attitude, non-violence, kindness and social service. It rapidly spread to south-east Asia and a few other countries.

Buddhism, however, soon deviated from the teachings of its founder. Incorporating into its system the idol worship and ritualism against which Buddhism had started its career, there remained nothing to distinguish it from Hinduism except the numerous categories of gods and goddesses to which the latter owed allegiance Buddhism was ever willing to adapt itself to the environment of local conditions where it spread , it was divided into numerous sects , incorporated superstitions, complicated ideas and concepts and degenerated into a cess-pool of moral corruption Prof Ishwar Topa observes in *Hindustani Tamaddun*

> " . . the Kingdom that was established under the patronage of Buddhism began to present a vast scene of idolatry The atmosphere in the monasteries was changing and heretic innovations were being introduced one after another "[1]

The degeneration of Buddhism has been described thus by Jawahar Lal Nehru in the *Discovery of India*

> "Brahmanism made of Buddha an *avatar*, a god So did Buddhism. The Mahayana doctrine spread rapidly, but it lost in quality and distinctiveness what it gained in extent The monasteries became rich centres of vested interests, and their discipline became lax Magic and superstition crept into popular forms of worship There was a progressive degeneration of Buddhism in India after the first millennium of its existence Mrs Rhys Davis points out its diseased state during that period 'Under the over-powering influence of these sickly imaginations the moral teachings of Gautama have been almost hid from view The theories grew and flourished, each new step, each new

1 Dr Ishwar Topa , Vol I, pp 137-138

hypothesis demanded another, until the whole sky was filled with forgeries of the brain, and the nobler and simpler lessons of the founder of the religion were smothered beneath the glittering mass of metaphysical subtleties[1] . . . There were several bright periods subsequently and many remarkable men arose. But both Brahminism and Buddhism deteriorated and degrading practices grew up in them It became difficult to distinguish the two "[2]

In none of the countries in which Buddhism had spread a person was born during the long period of its rule, who could reform the degenerated Buddhism, infuse the breath of new life into it and bring it back to the teachings of Gautama

Hinduism gradually absorbed Buddhism into itself and finally Sankaracharya banished it almost totally from India in the eighth century by reviving the old Hindu faith. Hardly any trace of Buddhism was left in India, wherever it still survived, it was little more than a decadent, local cult of no importance On the other hand, Sankaracharya, endowed with intelligence, courage and religious fervour succeeded in eliminating Buddhism from India but he could not or perhaps never intended to revive the ancient Hindu religion in its original and pristine purity by inculcating faith in the unity of the Supreme Being, direct relationship between man and God, equality and social justice As a result, both the Indian religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, still survive with the sickly characteristics of their decadent state viz superstitious beliefs and rituals, idolatry and caste system. V. S Ghate, the late Professor of Sanskrit in Elphinstone College, Bombay, writing on Sankaracharya in the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics says that 'the greatest object of Sankara's labours was the revival of the system of religion and philosophy taught in the *Upanisads*[3]'. Sankara, succeeded in putting down the hetrodox systems and establishing the doctrine of pantheistic monism, as presented in

1 Taken from Radhakrishnan's '*Indian Philosophy*'
2 Nehru . pp 141-142
3 E R E , p 186

the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagwad Gita*, but he 'did not attack or destroy idolatory' [1] Sankara, condemned all ritualism and *Karama* and at the same time defended the worship of popular gods, which was to him a 'symbolism rather than idolatory'.[1] Sankara considered idolatory a necessity at one stage of religious growth which is either given up or suffered to remain from its harmlessness when the religious spirit is mature Thus Sankara 'allowed idols as symbols of the great infinite for those who cannot rise themselves to the comprehension of the one, changeless, non-qualified *Brahman*' [2]

In this way all the efforts made from the time of Sankaracharya down to Dayanand Sarswati and Mahatma Gandhi to reform the eastern religions proved fruitless to renovate Hinduism and Buddhism in a manner to make them compatible with revelation, religious urge of humanity and the requirements of changing times. These religions have, as a result of this stagnation, succumbed to materialism, the vast areas of human life and behaviour have drifted beyond their reach while they have themselves taken shelter behind temples and shrines, soulless rituals and traditions Any number of obscurantist movements working for the revival of the ancient Indian languages and culture can be seen at work in the country today but none is capable of giving a soul-stirring call inviting people back to religion by reinterpreting the true content of religious and moral faith in the light of current needs

No religion can maintain its vigour for long and offer a satisfying answer to the questions of ever-changing life unless it can produce guides and standard-bearers who can infuse a breath of new life into its followers through their personal example of unflinching faith, moral and spiritual excellence, immaculate sincerity, heroic sacrifice, self-confidence, ardent zeal, intellectual eminence and erudite scholarship Life always poses new problems, temptations of flesh are ever on its side, materialistic urge in man always impels him to take the ways of self-indulgence and

1 E R E , p 189
2 *Ibid*

licentiousness, and, at the same time, we have always had men who were ardent and zealous supporters of the epicurean view and affluent living, materialistic brilliance and worldly success Therefore, unless a religion also gets indefatigable defenders, renovators and redeemers who can face the challenge of atheism and materialism, it cannot hope to remain a living force for its followers for long

Defence Against Heresy

History bears a testimony to the fact that there has never been a spell, however brief, during the past one and a half thousand years when the message of Islam was eclipsed or its teachings were engulfed by heresy, and the Islamic conscience became dormant enough to accept a contaminated faith. Whenever an effort was made from any quarter whatsoever to distort the tenets of Islam, pervert or falsify its teachings, or it was attacked by sensist-materialism, some one invariably came forward to accept the challenge and fight it out to the grief of Islam's adversary. History records many a powerful movement in its day, which posed a danger for Islam but now it is difficult to find out even the true impact of its thought Only a few people know today what *Qadriyah* (Rationalists believing in free will), *Jahmiyah* (Determinists), *'Itizāl* (Dissenters), creation of the Qur'ān, Existentialist Monism, *Dīn-i-Ilāhi*, etc , exactly mean, although these represented, at one time or the other, very important schools of thought and, with the most powerful imperial powers of their day and some extremely learned and able persons at their back they had threatened to stifle Islam. Finally, however, it was Islam which gained ascendancy over these contending forces. These powerful movements are known today as simply different schools of thought and are to be found now in philosophical and dialectical treatises This tradition of struggle against un-Islam, the spirit to preserve and renovate the prestine teachings of the faith and the effort to infuse people with a revolutionary spirit to re-assert the divine message are as old as Islam itself.

Lost Sources of History :

The responsibility for not bringing to light this memorable chapter of Islamic History does not exclusively rest with the historians All those persons are equally responsible who refuse to accord recognition to the works not formally categorised as historical literature and catalogued as such in one or the other library. A vast treasure of information on the social, political and historical events of the bygone days is in fact to be found in the religious works which can serve as a valuable source of history. These are the writings of the religious savants and scholars wherein they have laid bare their innermost feelings, given numerous accounts of the incidents they or their contemporaries had come across, quoted their teachers and mentors and recorded proceedings of the profound and heartfelt reunions of their masters and fellows There are compilations of letters and discourses from which we can gain access to the thoughts and ideas, feelings and emotions of their writers There are also monographs written for the refutation of innovations and deviations or to censure the wayward sections of society. If one could extend his vision to all these writings and had had time to cull out relevant data from these works, a complete and detailed history of Islamic missionary effort could be written to show that the effort to re-kindle the fire of religious ardour and dynamic energy into the followers of Islam has never ceased for a moment and that the Muslims too have never remained cold or indifferent to the call

Legacy of Islam :

This is a legacy of Islam which we have inherited But, by legacy we do not mean here a 'bequest', for Islam is a living religion What we have really inherited is the treasure consisting of the sureness of conviction, and immutable faith, Traditions of the Prophet, higher moral values, canonical laws and the magnificent Islamic literature which has been bequeathed to us by every single individual who ever worked for the establishment of the kingdom of God, braved the dangers of ignorance and materi-

alism, gave a call for the *Din* of Allah, revived the teachings of Islam and filled the people with faith and enthusiasm. In truth and reality, all those persons who have re-oriented Islam through painstaking researches into its original sources and re-interpretation of its doctrines, defended Islam against philosophies and schools of thought incompatible with it; saved it from discord and turmoil, compiled the Traditions of the Prophet or presided over different schools of *Fiqah*; showed to others the path of temperance and moderation, censured the society for its waywardness and made it turn from that path, dispelled the doubts by examining and elucidating the fundamentals of reason and logic, founded the new science of dialectics; carried on the work left by prophets and apostles of God, filled the people with zeal and self-confidence in their own inherent vitality; made the most inveterate enemies of Islam to acknowledge its truth—in short, all those who have pressed their spiritual, moral and intellectual capabilities to the service of the faith and, not unoften, accomplished what emperors and conquerors could never have achieved—have contributed to the legacy now owned by us and deserve our respect and approbation. Had not these defenders of Islam worked with ardent zeal and immaculate sincerity and made heroic sacrifices for the cause held dear by them, we would not have inherited what has been recounted in this volume and which still contains a reservoir of guidance and inspiration for us. We can be rightly proud of these ancestors of ours and present with confidence the story of their work and achievements before other nations

The writer of these pages has endeavoured to depict the picture of these eminent personalities and described what in his judgment can rightly be ascribed as their accomplishment in the field of Islamic revival and renovation

CHAPTER I

UMAR IBN ABDUL AZIZ

Reformist Endeavours of the First Century :

Soon after the *Khilafat-i-Rāshida* (the right-guided caliphate) came to an end and the Ummayyad empire, which was more Arab than Islamic, consolidated itself, the need for reformation and renovation in Islam was felt keenly Customs, traditions and remembrances of the pagan past, which had been discredited and repressed under the impact of the Prophet's teachings and the vigilant eye of the *Khilafat-i-Rāshida*, began to re-assert themselves among the new Arab converts to Islam. The then Government was not organised according to the dictates of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*; its guiding lights were Arab diplomacy, expediency and interest of the State. Arab racialism, tribal pride, partisan spirit and nepotism, regarded as unpardonable sins during the days of the *Khilafat-i-Rāshida*, became the hall-mark of the new aristocracy. The unruly spirit of the Arabs, which had sought asylum in the far off deserts, returned again to re-assert itself; extravagance, pretentiousness and boastfulness took the place of virtuous deeds and moral excellence.[1] *Bait-ul-māl* (the State

1 The then mentality is aptly demonstrated by Abul Faraj Isb'hani in his book '*Aghāni*', in which he has related how two Arab Chiefs of the Ummayyad period, Haushab and 'Ikramah, vyingly challenged each other about the quantity of food required to feed the household and guests of each As Haushab was likely to win in the contest, 'Ikramah purchased several hundred bags of flour, distributed it amongst his tribesmen for kneading and asked them to pile up the dough in a pit which was covered with grass He then managed to get Haushab's horse pass over the pit As the poor beast fell into the pit, its neck and head being only visible above the dough, 'Ikramah's fame about the quantity of flour required to feed his tribe soon spread far and wide, and many poets sang of his greatness (*Ramāt ul-Mathalith* Vol I, pp 176-177)

Exchequer) became personal property of the Caliphs who wasted public money on professional poets, eulogists, jugglers and buffoons The courtiers of the rulers began to be accorded a preferential treatment which gave them heart to break the law of the land [1] Music and singing grew almost to a craze [2]

The extravagant rulers, surrounded by dissolute parasites who flocked to the capital, demoralised the society and produced an aristocracy resembling the pagan Arab wastrels of the age of *Ignorance* in morals and behaviour. It appeared as if the pre-Islamic *Ignorance* had returned with a vendetta to settle its accounts of the past forty years with Islam

Religious Teachers of the Ummayyad period :

Although crass materialism had captured the soul of the ruling classes during the Ummayyad period, the masses had still not forsaken the moral values and the deep-seated deference for Islamic teachings The regard for moral worth and tenets of Islam was due mainly to those scholars of impeccable worth and ability who were held in high esteem by the masses for their moral and spiritual excellence, selflessness, piety, sagacity and beneficence Outside the governmental circles these persons wielded tremendous influence over the people which acted as a corrective force and saved the masses from falling a prey to the pull of wordly temptations The person most respected and loved during the period was ʿAli ibn Husain (Zainul ʿAbdin) In the simple, pure and saintly life led by him, ʿAli ibn Husain had no peer Once Hisham ibn ʿAbdul-Malik, the crown prince, came to the Kaʿaba for *Tawāf* (circumambulation) but owing to

1 The famous Christian poet Akhtal (d 59/701) once came completely drunk, in the court of Caliph 'Abdul-Malik Ibn Marwan, wine dripping from his beard and the cross on his chest, but nobody had the courage to remonstrate him (*Aghāni*, Vol VII, pp 177-178)

2 Once a famous singer of Iraq Hunain, visited Madina along with his party Such a large crowd gathered to hear his recital that the roof of the house in which he was singing gave way and Hunain died after receiving severe injuries (*Aghāni*, Vol II, pp 122-123)

the huge gathering he could not reach the *Hajr-i-Aswad*. He, therefore, sat down to wait till he could get a chance to kiss it. In the meantime ʿAli ibn Husain arrived and the people at once cleared the way for him to make the *Tawāf* and kiss *Hajr-i-Aswad*. Everyone present in the Kaʿaba received ʿAli ibn Husain with the utmost deference. At last Hisham, pretending as if he did not know ʿAli ibn Husain, asked who he was. The poet Farzdaq, who happened to be present on the occasion instantaneously composed an introductory ode for ʿAli ibn Husain. It is reported that certain additions were made to this famous ode later on but it is still regarded as a masterpiece of Arabic poetry. It opened with the verse :

Pebbles and paths of Mecca affirm his virtue ;
The House of God knows him well as the environs do.

Other highly reputed religious scholars[1] of outstanding piety during the Ummayyad period were Hasan al-Muthanna, his son ʿAbdullah-al-Mahadh, Sālim ibn ʿAbdullah ibn ʿUmar, Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn Abū Bakr, Saʿeed ibn Musayʿib and ʿUrwah ibn Zubair. Complete detachment from the ruling circles of their day, immaculate selflessness, unswerving truthfulness, readiness to serve and make any sacrifice for the cause of religion, erudition and moral worth had made each of these persons an ideal of Islamic piety. The demoralisation that had set in owing to the immoral conduct of the ruling elite was undoubtedly on the increase but the moral influence weilded by these persons on the masses was not without a salutary effect, their pure and simple life was a standing reproach to the unprincipled this-wordliness of the rulers, which made people think of reforming their intem-perate life

Political Revolution :

Gradually the contaminating influxion of the political revolu-tion deepened and spread out, and, at the same time, there was a

1 For a detailed description *see al-Zahbi* : Vol I, pp 46, 77, 84 and 53, and *Sifat us-Safwah* · Vol II, pp 44, 47, 49 and 50

marked decrease in the number of religious teachers who could exert a strong and ennobling influence over the people like the pious souls of the preceding period Now it became impossible to revitalize the people and fill them with the faith and moral worth without a revolution in the State itself

The Ummayyad power was, however, entrenched in such a firm military strength that it was not possible to dislodge it, nor there existed any internal or external force which could dare to challenge it Not long before two efforts made by Husain ibn ʿAli and ʿAbdullah ibn Zubair had proved abortive and one could hardly expect any more armed insurrection for bringing about a political revolution Autocratic and hereditary form of government had produced a despondency which had left no hope for any change in the prevailing conditions and it appeared as if the fate of Muslims had been sealed for a fairly long time It required a miracle alone for the Islamic precepts to find an expression again in the political law guiding the community's behaviour And the miracle did happen at the most appropriate time

Accession of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz :

The miracle was the accession of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAziz to the throne in 99 A H (717 A D) He was a grandson of Marwan and his mother, Umm ʿĀsim, was a grand-daughter of ʿUmar I, the second Caliph The Ummayyad and the Farooqi families were thus jointly represented[1] in ʿUmar II, surnamed as

1 ʿUmar I had ordered that nobody should adulterate milk by mixing water into it Once, while wandering about at night to inquire into the condition of the people, he heard a woman asking her daughter to mix water into the milk before the day-break The girl refused by reminding her mother of the order given by the Caliph When the mother retorted by saying that the Caliph was not present and he would not know of it, the daughter replied that God is Omniscient even if Caliph was not present ʿUmar I was so pleased with the reply that he asked his son ʿĀsim to marry the girl, saying that he hoped that she will give birth to a man who would rule over Arabia ʿUmar II was the daughter's son of ʿĀsim (ʿAbdul Hakam pp 17-18)

the pious Caliph, who brought about the much-needed revolution.

ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz was born in 61 A.H He was a cousin of the preceding Caliph, Sulaimān ibn ʿAbdul Malik and had been posted as Governor of Madina since the time of Walid ibn ʿAbdul Malik, the Caliph before Sulaimān. The life led by him as Governor was entirely different from that he adopted as a Caliph. He was known as a polished and decorous aristocrat of refined taste Anybody could tell from the fragrance of perfumes he used that ʿUmar has passed that way. He was all the rage for the fashionable youths of his day. Except for his integrity of character and righteous disposition there was nothing to suggest that he was destined to perform a memorable task in the history of Islam.

But he proved to be a standing miracle of Islam. The very way he ascended to the Caliphate was miraculous; for, nobody could have predicted the dramatic turn that the events took in bringing him to the throne He could not have hoped to be anything more than a viceroy under the hereditary custom of accession to the Caliphate, but God had willed otherwise. Sulaimān ibn ʿAbdul Malik fell seriously ill and lost all hopes of recovery. He was anxious to leave the throne to one of his sons who were still minors. Shaken with this anxiety he got his sons put on longer dresses, uniforms and armours so that they might appear sizeable, but all his efforts proved fruitless. In his dreadful agony, he cast a pathetic glance over his sons and said: "He is really fortunate who has grown-up sons". Reja' ibn Haiwah happened to be present at the time and he promptly proposed ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz as the successor to the throne. Caliph Sulaiman accepted the suggestion and thus by his timely intervention Reja' rendered yeoman service for the revival of Islam.

Character of ʿUmar II :

Immediately upon his accession, ʿUmar dismissed provincial governors known to be cruel or unjust to the people. All the jewellery and valuable presents brought before him on accession

to the throne were deposited in the State treasury He was now a completely changed man; he considered himself a successor to Caliph ʿUmar I, son of Khattāb, rather than Sulaimān ibn ʿAbdul Malik Slaves of the royal household were emancipated, the royal court modelled after Persian and Byzantine Royal patterns was now marked by an austere and primitive simplicity. He returned to the State not only his ancestoral fief but even the valuables and jewellery his wife had received from her father and brothers He led such a simple and ascetic life as it would have been difficult to find among the monks and recluses much less the kings and emperors. On several occasions he was late for Friday prayers since he had to wait till his only shirt dried up after a wash Before Caliph ʿUmar II ascended to the throne *Baitul-Māl*, the public treasury, was treated as a personal property of the King from which members of royal family were granted enormous sums, but now they had to be content with the paltry stipends Once, when he was talking to his daughters, he noticed that the children cupped their mouths while talking to him. On making enquiries he found that since only pulses and onions were available in his house on the day which had been taken by the children, they cupped their mouths lest its smell should offend him With tears in his eyes, ʿUmar said "My child, would you like to have sumptuous food and your father to be consigned to Hell[1] ?" He was the ruler of the mightiest empire of his day but he did not have enough money to perform the *Hajj*. He once asked his servant if he had saved anything so that he could go for the *Hajj* The servant informed him that he had only ten or twelve *dinars* and thus he could not undertake the journey After a few days, ʿUmar II received a sum sufficient to perform the *Hajj* from his personal holdings The servant congratulated ʿUmar II, and said that now he could go for the *Hajj* ʿUmar II however, replied. "We have been deriving benefit from these holdings since a long time Now Muslims have a right to enjoy its fruits" Then he got the entire proceeds deposited in the public treasury

[1] ʿAbdul Hakam, p 55

'Umar II never spent more than two *dirhams* on his messing. If any official came to see him and began talking of the Caliph's private affairs, he would promptly put off the candle provided by the State and ask for his own candle to be brought in. He would never use the hot water taken from the State mess or even inhale the fragrance of musk belonging to the *Bait-ul-Māl*[1].

'Umar II was careful not for his person alone. He always exhorted the State officials to be extremely cautious in their dealings involving the State property The Governor of Madina, Abū-Bakr ibn Hazm had submitted an application to Sulaimān ibn 'Abdul Malik demanding candlesticks and a lamp-glass for the official work By the time the requisition reached the Caliph, Sulaimān had died and it was placed before 'Umar II He wrote "O Abū-Bakr, I remember the days when you wandered during the dark nights of winter *without* candlesticks and light, and, were you then in a better condition than now ? I hope you have now enough candlesticks to spare a few for conducting the business of the State.[2]" Similarly on another request made for supply of paper for official work, he remarked · "Make the point of your pen finer, write closely and concisely , for, Muslims do not require such detailed reports which are unnecessarily a burden on the State exchequer."[2]

Extreme cautiousness, moderation, simplicity and unaffected piety were not the only feature of 'Umar's character. He transformed the view-point of his government making the weal of the people the sole object of administration. Before 'Umar II the State was concerned mainly with collecting revenues and spending it, having nothing to do with the moral guidance and religious instruction of the people The historic dictum of 'Umar II that 'Muhammad was sent as a Prophet and not as a collector',[3]

1 'Abdul-Hakam, p 44
2 *Ibid* , p 64
3 Abu Yusuf, p 75

adequately illustrates the objective he had set before the State under him In truth and reality, during the entire period of his Caliphate he sought to translate this idea into practice He always preferred principles, moral dictates and demands of the faith to political expediency and never cared a whit for pecuniary losses suffered by the State if the policy commended by religion entailed it During his reign the non-Muslims were embracing Islam in ever-increasing numbers which meant a dwindling income from the poll-tax. As the sharp fall in revenues posed a danger to the financial stability of the State, ʿUmar's attention was drawn towards it But his reply was that the situation was eminently in accord with the objectives underlying the prophethood of Muhammad To another official he wrote "I would be too glad if all the non-Muslims embrace Islam and (owing to the drying up of income from poll-tax) we have to take up cultivation for earning our living "[1] A fixed amount of land revenue was to be remitted by the provincial Government of Yaman every year whether it had a favourable crop or not ʿUmar II ordered that the revenues should be assessed in accordance with the agricultural production every year He added that he would willingly accept it even if a handful of grain were to be received in pursuance of his order.[2] He discontinued levy of octroi throughout the kingdom saying that it was prohibited by the Qurʾān

> *O my people ! Give full measure and full weight in justice and wrong not people in respect of their goods And do not evil in the earth, causing corruption*
>
> (*Hud 85*)

ʿUmar II used to say that people have made octroi lawful by changing its name.[3] Barring the few taxes allowed by the *Sharīʿah*, he abolished all taxes and duties levied by his

1 *Manāqib*, p 64
2 ʿAbdul Hakam, p 126
3 *Ibid* p 99

predecessors.[1] All the land and sea routes were opened for trade without any embargo whatsoever.[2]

Far-reaching reforms were introduced in the administration of the kingdom. Some of the steps taken were Weights and measures were standardised,[3] State officials were precluded from entering into any business or trade,[4] unpaid labour was made illegal,[4] pasture-lands and game-preserves reserved for the royal family or other dignitaries were distributed to the landless cultivators or made a public property,[5] strict measures were taken to stop illegal gratification of state employees who were forbidden to accept gifts,[6] all officers holding responsible posts were directed to afford adequate facilities to those who wanted to present their complaints to them in person, a proclamation was made every year on the occasion of pilgrimage that any one who would bring to the notice of administration any mal-treatment by an State official or prefer a useful suggestion, shall be rewarded 100 to 300 *dinars*.[7]

Solicitude for Moral Reformation :

After the *Khulāfat-i-Rāshida* came to an end, the Caliphs began to consider themselves simply as monarchs and administrators; they were neither capable nor had the time to bother about the moral and social conditions of their subjects In fact, the Caliphs were never expected to advise people in religious affairs, take steps for their moral, religious or spiritual advancement or assume the role of a pulpiter. This was considered to be the domain of scholars and religious luminaries, *ʿulmā* and traditionists. ʿUmar Ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz did away with this dichotomy and proved himself to

1 ʿAbdul Hakam, p 99
2 *Ibid*, p 98
3 *Ibid*, p 99
4 *Ibid*, p 100
5 *Ibid*, p 97
6 *Ibid*, p 162
7 *Ibid*, p 141

by really a successor of the Prophet, as his office implied No sooner did he ascend the Caliphate, he sent out quite lengthy letters and directives which dealt with more about religious and moral reforms than with the so-called administrative affairs His edicts embodied a spirit of preaching, religious and moral, rather than the dispensation of government In his letters he would compare the social and moral condition of people with that in the days of the Prophet and early Caliphate and elaborate the fiscal and administrative system required to bring about an Islamic regenaration,[1] impress on the governors and generals the importance of timely performance of their prayers and presiding at these services,[2] exhort public servants to inculcate the awe of God and meticulously follow the regulations of the *Shan'ah*,[3] charge his officers with the responsibility of spreading the message of Islam in the provinces under them, which he considered to be the sole objective of Divine revelation and the prophethood of Muhammad,[4] insist on the enforcement of what is incumbent and on the prevention of that which is forbidden, and warn them of the harmful effects of neglecting this obligation,[5] elaborate the criminal law of Islam and instruct the magistrates to be lenient in awarding punishments,[6] draw attention towards the deviations and innovations, customs and foreign traditions that had found a way into the life of the people, forbid lamentations and put a stop to the custom requiring women to accompany the funeral processions as well as their public appearance,[7] denigrate tribal partisanship,[7] and, prohibit laxity in the use of *nabidh* which gradually led to drinking bouts and to numerous other vices[8]

1 'Abdul Hakam, p 69
2 *Ibid*, p 79
3 *Ibid*, p 92
4 *Ibid*, pp 93-94
5 *Ibid* p 167
6 *Ibid*, pp 80-81
7 *Ibid*, p 108
8 *Ibid*, p 102

Compilation of Traditions :

The study and cultivation of religious sciences did not escape attention of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbul ʿAzīz Drawing the attention of an eminent man of letters of his time, Abū Bakr ibn Hazm, towards compilation of the traditions of the Holy Prophet, he wrote .

> "Reduce into writing whatever traditions of the Holy Prophet you can collect, for I fear that after the traditionists pass away, the knowledge will also perish."[1]

He made a pointed reference to the collections of ʿUmrah bint ʿAbdur Rahmān Ansārīyah and Qāsim ibn Muhammad ibn Abū Bakr which he wanted to be recorded. The task was not simply entrusted to Abū Bakr ibn Hazm but circulars were issued to provincial governors and other notable *ʿulemā* commanding them to 'collect all the traditions of the Prophet of Islam wherever these could be found' Simultaneously, ʿUmar II also granted stipends to those entrusted with the task so that they could pursue the job whole-heartedly [2]

ʿUmai ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz was himself a man of learning and he took keen interest in the interpretation of the Traditions and cannon law In the beginning of his Caliphate he circulated an edict which said :

> "Islam has laid down certain limits, duties and obligations. Whoever will follow these, shall be rewarded by a truer content of the faith, but those who do not pursue these, their faith shall remain imperfect. If God keeps me live, I will teach you the fundamentals of the faith and will make you follow these, but if I die earlier, I won't care, for I am not at all eager for your company "[3]

Defender of the Faith :

The unalloyed Islamic thought and spirit of religion that ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz tried to infuse among the Muslims

1 Bukhārī Vol I, p 20
2 ʿAbdul Hakam, p 167
3 Bukhārī (*Kitāb-ul-Īmān*), Vol I, p 6

and give a practical shape through the State he presided, can be gauged from the letters and edicts he issued from time to time to the different functionaries of his government. These despatches show what a deep understanding of Islam he had without the least trace of pre-Islamic *Ignorance* or the stamp of Ummayyad royalty.

It was once reported to him that certain tribal chiefs and Ummayyad aristocrats had revived the pagan custom[1] of entering into alliances and were giving a call to one another in the name of tribal solidarity during their fights and forays. This custom cut at the very root of Islamic concept of brotherhood and the social order it wanted to bring into existence. Earlier rulers would have been complacent at it or even encouraged the practice as a political expediency but ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAziz, being fully alive to the pernicious implications of the practice, issued an order to Dhahhāk ibn ʿAbdur-Rahmān for curbing the evil forthwith. In it he writes:

"Praise be to God and peace unto His Apostle. Therefore you should know that Allah does not like any religion other than Islam, which he has chosen for Himself and His bondsmen. Allah has been pleased to honour His religion, Islam, with an Scripture, which has made Islam distinct from un-Islam. In it He says:

Now hath come unto you light from Allah and a plain Scripture

Whereby Allah guideth him who seeketh His good pleasure unto paths of peace. He bringeth them out of darkness unto light by His decree, and guideth them unto a straight path.

(*Al-Maʾida* : 15-16)

Allah also says:

With truth We have sent it down, and with truth had it descended.

And We have sent thee as naught else save a bearer of good tidings and a warner.

(*Bani Israel* : 105)

1 A pre-Islamic custom under which two tribes took an oath of fealty to help each other in every eventuality irrespective of the justice or otherwise of the cause for which their help was to be sought.

"God Almighty endowed prophethood on Muhammad (peace be upon him) and revealed the Scripture to him. Then, O Arabs, as you know, you lived in ignorance, idolatry and impurity, were plunged in poverty, disorder and chaos; fights and forays baulked large in your life, you were looked down upon by others, and, whatever little light of Divine Guidance was available to other nations, you were deprived even of that There was no perversion and depravity which was not to be found amongst you. If you lived, yours was a life of ignorance and infidelity, and, if you died, you were consigned to the Hell. At last Allah saved you from these evils, idolatry and anarchy, hatred and conflicts Although many amongst you denied and decried the Prophet of God, he remained steadfast in his endeavour till a few poor people amongst you responded to his call Fearing the worst, these men always ran for their lives but God gave them asylum, sent His succour to them and gave them strength through those whom He chose to enlighten with Islam The Prophet of God was to depart from this world and Allah had to fulfil the promise made to His messenger. The promise of Allah never changes but none save a few of the faithful believed in what God Almighty had promised

He it is Who hath sent His messenger with the guidance and the Religion of Truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religion, however much the idolaters may be averse.

(*Al-Taubah 33*)

"In another verse Allah has promised to the Muslims.

Allah hath promised such of you as believe and do good works that He will surely make them to succeed (the present rulers) in the earth even as He caused those who were before them to succeed (others); and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He hath approved for them, and will give them in exchange safety after this fear. They serve Me. They ascribe nothing as partner unto Me

(*An-Nūr : 55*)

"Allah has fulfilled the promise made by him to His Prophet and the Muslims Therefore, O Muslims, remember that whatever God Almighty has bestowed on you is solely on account of Islam, you are victorious on your enemies in the world and will be raised as a witness unto others in the Hereafter But for Islam, you have no refuge in this world nor after death, you have nothing to fall back upon nor a source of strength, no protection, no safeguard And if you are fortunate enough to see the fulfilment of the promise made by Allah, you need to pin your hopes in the abode of the Hereafter, since God has said.

As for the Abode of the Hereafter we assign it unto those who seek not oppression in the earth, nor yet corruption

The sequel is for those who ward off (evil)

(Al-Qasas · 83)

"I warn you of the disaster that will befall you if you do not act according to the teachings of the *Qur'ān* The bloodshed and disorder, turmoil and affliction to which you had been exposed as a result of disregarding the guidance provided by the Scripture is recent history. You should, therefore, desist from what has been prohibited by Allah in His Scripture, for, there is nothing more dreadful than the admonition sounded by God Almighty I have been constrained to write this letter on account of the reports reaching me from the countryside about those who have been recently sent there as stewards and administrators These are an ignorant and stupid set of persons who are not aware of God's commandments, they have forgotten the special favour and benevolence of Allah over them or they have rather shown ingratitude for the undeserved favours bestowed on them I have been told that they seek the help of the people of Mudhar and Yaman, for they think that these tribes are their allies and partisans Glorified be Allah, Who alone deserves all praise. What an ungrateful and ill-beseeming people these are, and how

inclined they are to invite death, destruction and doom ! They have no eyes to see what a despicable position they have chosen for themselves, nor are they aware how they have deprived themselves of peace and amity. Now I realise that miscreants and ruffians are shaped as such by their own intentions and also that Hell was not created in vain Have they nevèr heard of the commandment of God Almighty ?

The believers are naught else than brothers. Therefore make peace between your brethren and observe your duty to Allah tha' haply ye may obtain mercy

(Al-Hujurāt . 10).

And have they not heard this verse too ?

This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion AL-ISLAM

(Al-Ma'idah 3).

"I have been told that certain tribes are entering into alliances to help one another against their enemies as they used to do in the bygone days of *Ignorance*, although the Prophet has prohibited unconditional alliances for helping each other. The Prophet has said 'There is no partisanship in Islam' In the times of *Ignorance*, allies expected help from each other in every unjust cause, no matter whether it led to oppression or wrongdoing, transgression of the commands of God or of the Prophet

"I warn everyone who may happen to read my letter or hear its content against taking any shelter except Islam and seeking amity of anyone except God Almighty and His Prophet. I again warn everyone with all the emphasis at my command and seek to make Allah my witness against these persons, for He has authority over every being and He is nearer to everyone than his jugular veins "[1]

1 'Abdul Hakam, pp. 104-107

The directives sent by ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz to the commander of a military expedition illustrate the extent to which he had imbibed the Qurʾānic mode of thought and view-point, and how he differed diametrically from other rulers and emperors of his time In one of his edicts to Mansūr ibn Ghālib he wrote :

"This is a directive from the bondsman of Allah and Commander of the Faithful to Mansūr ibn Ghālib Whereas the Commander of the Faithful has charged Mansūr to wage war against those who might oppose him, the latter is also instructed to inculcate awe of God ; since it constitutes the best of provisions, the most effective strategy and the real power. For the sin is even more dangerous than the ruses of the enemy, the Commander of the Faithful bids upon Mansūr that instead of taking fright of his enemy. he should fear transgressing the limits of God. We overcome our enemies in the battlefield only because of their vices and sins, for, had it not been so, we would not have had the courage to face them We cannot deploy troops in the same numbers as our enemies can do nor do we possess the equipments they have got Thus, if we equate overselves with our enemies in misdeeds and transgressions. they would undoubtedly gain a victory over us by virtue of their numerical superiority and strength. Behold, if we are not able to gain ascendancy over our enemies on account of our righteousness. we would never be in a position to defeat them through our might. We need not keep an eye upon anything more than the enmity of our own wickedness nor do we have to hold in leash anything more than our own viciousness You should realise the fact that God Almighty has deputed wardens over you who never part company with you and they are aware of whatever you do in your camps and cantonments secretly or in public Therefore, do not put yourself to shame by exceeding the limits of God ; be kind to others, especially as you have left your hearths and homes for the sake of

God. Never consider yourselves superior to your enemies, nor take your victory for granted because of the sinfulness of your foes, for many a people worse than his enemy was granted ascendancy in the past. Therefore, seek the help of God against your own temptations in the same way as you desire the succour of God against your opponent. I would also beseech God's blessings for myself and you.

"Commander of the Faithful also bids Mansūr ibn Ghāhb that he should treat his men with leniency. He should not require his troops to undertake toilsome journeys, nor refuse to encamp when they require rest The troops enfeebled by exertion and long travels, should not be required to face an enemy whose forces and the beasts of burden are taking rest at their own place. Thus if Mansūr does not accord a humane treatment to his men, his enemy would easily gain ascendancy over Mansūr's forces. Verily, help can be sought from God alone

"For giving rest to his men and the beast of burden and also for getting his armaments repaired, the Commander of the Faithful orders Mansūr ibn Ghālib to break his journey on every Friday for the whole day and night thereof. He is also ordered to encamp far away from the habitations which have entered into treaty relations with us, and allow none from his troops to visit their dwellings, markets or gatherings Only those of his men who are firm in faith and trustworthy and who would neither be ill-disposed nor commit a sin against the people could be allowed to visit such habitations for collection of lawful dues You are as much bound to guarantee their rights as they are enjoined to fulfil the duties devolving on them *i e.* you have to honour your obligations to them so long as they do theirs. You should never try to gain an advantage over your enemy through persecution of those who have come under your protection, for you have already got a share (in the shape of *Jaziah* or poll-tax) in their earnings and you niether need to increase it nor they are bound to pay more.

We have too not cut down your provisions, nor deprived you of anything required for strengthening you You have been given charge of our best forces and provided with everything required for the job Now you need to pay attention to the land of polytheists, our enemies, and need not concern yourself with those who have come under our protection After having made the best possible arrangements for you, we have trust in God Almighty There is no power, no might, save from Allah.

"And the Commander of the Faithful further directs that you shall appoint only such persons as your spies from amongst the Arabs and non-Arabs who are guileless and trustworthy, for the intelligence received through deceitful persons is hardly of any use Even if a treacherous fellow passes on to you some correct information, he ought really to be treated as an spy of the enemy and not yours May God have peace on you "[1]

In another circular letter to the provincial chiefs he wrote

"Verily God has entrusted the charge of administration to me I have not accepted this responsibility for the sake of riches or sensual delight, feasts or attires, for God had already favoured me with a fortune that only a few can boast of. For I fully realise the grave responsibility of the charge entrusted to me, I have taken upon myself this obligation with a great deal of anxiety and heart-searching I know I would be called upon to render the account in the presence of God when claimants and defendants would both be present to argue their cases on the Day of Requital—a Burdensome Day, indeed, save for those on whom Allah showers his mercy and whom He protects from the grievous ordeal.

"I bid you to be cautious and God-fearing in all the affairs of the State committed to your charge and ask you to fulfil your obligations, perform that which has been ordained by God and desist from the acts prohibited by the

1 'Abdul Hakam, pp 84-87

Shariᶜah. You ought to keep an eye upon yourself and your actions, be cautious of the acts that unite you with Allah, on the one hand, and your liegemen, on the other. You are aware that the salvation and safety lies in complete submission to the Almighty and the ultimate goal of all endeavours should be, by the same token, to make preparations for success on the Appointed Day.

"If you will, you might take a lesson from the happenings around you. Only then I can drive home the truth to you through my preachings.

"May God have peace on you"[1]

Propagation of Islam:

The efforts of ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbdul ᶜAzIz were not limited to the enforcement of the *Shariᶜah*, as the law of the land, and reformation of the Muslims only. He also paid attention towards spreading the message of Islam among the non-Muslims, and his endeavours were also successful on account of his personal example of simple life, unaffected piety, unswerving uprightness and immaculate sincerity, Balāzuri writes in *Futūh-ul-Buldān*:

"ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbdul ᶜAzIz wrote seven letters to the rajas in India inviting them to embrace Islam. He promised that if they did so, he would guarantee continued existence of their kingdoms and their rights and obligations would be the same as those of the other Muslims

"The name and fame of ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbdul ᶜAzIz had already reached those lands and when they received ᶜUmar's despatch they embraced Islam and adopted Arab names.[2]

"Ismaᶜil ibn ᶜAbdullah ibn Abi al-Mahājir, Governor of Maghrib (north-west Africa), administered the land with flawless justice and gave a good account of his character and morals He initiated proselytising activities among the Barber tribes Thereafter ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbdul ᶜAzIz

1 ᶜAbdul Hakam, pp 92-93

2 Balāzuri, pp 446-447.

sent a letter inviting those people to embrace Islam which was read out in huge gatherings of the natives by Isma'il. A large number of people were converted to Islam and at last Islam became the predominant faith of the land [1]

.. 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Aziz also wrote letters to the rulers and chiefs of Trans-oxiana[2] and exempted new converts to Islam in Khurasan from the payment of poll-tax (*Jaziah*) He also granted stipends and rewards to those who embraced Islam and got constructed rest houses for the travellers "[3]

Financial Reforms :

The financial reforms embarked upon by 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Aziz viz remission of numerous taxes and tithes disallowed by the *Shari'ah*, did not result in pecuniary difficulties or deficits in the State income On the contrary, people became so much well-off that it became difficult to find destitutes and beggars who would accept the poor-due (*Zakāt*)

Yahya ibn Sa'eed relates that 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Aziz had appointed him to collect the poor-due in Africa When he got the dues collected, he looked around for the needy and hard up persons, but he could not find a single individual who could be rendered assistance. He adds that 'Umar's economic policy had made everybody a man of substance and, therefore, he had no alternative but to purchase a number of slaves and then emancipate them on behalf of the Muslim populace [4]

Another man from the Quraish reports that during the extremely short reign of 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Aziz people used to remit substantial amounts pertaining to the poor-due to the State

1. Balāzuri, p 339
2 Countries in Central Asia to the north of river Oxus (*Ma-wara-un-Nahr* in Arabic)
3 Balāzuri, p 432
4 'Abdul Hakam, p 69

exchequer for being distributed among the poor, but these had to be returned to them as nobody entitled to receive these charities was to be found. He says that everyone had become so well-off during ʿUmar's time that nobody remained in straitened circumstances entitled to receive the poor-due.[1]

Apart from the prosperity of the masses, which is invariably a by-product of the Islamic form of government, the more important change accomplished by the regime of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz was the diversion in inclination and aptitude, mood and trend of the populace. His contemporaries narrate that whenever a few friends met during the regime of Walīd, they used to converse about buildings and architecture for that was the rage of Walīd; Sulaimān was fond of women and banquets, and these became the fad of his days; but, during the reign of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz the prevailing demeanour and subjects for discussion were prayers, supplicatory and benedicatory, obligatory and supererogatory. Whenever a few people gathered, they would ask each other about the voluntary prayers one offered for acquiring spiritual benefits, the portion of Qurʾān recited or committed to memory, fast observed every month, and so on so forth [2]

The guiding light for ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz and the impelling force behind his endeavours were his unflinching faith, the love and awe of the Supreme Being and conviction of accountability on the Day of Resurrection. Whatever he did was solely on account of the inducement, if inducement it can be called, to propitiate God Almighty. This was the urge and driving force which had made the ruler of the most powerful and extensive empire of the day to lead a life of austerity, forbearance and abstinence. If anybody advised him to raise his standard of living, as his position and office demanded, he would recite the Qurʾānic dictum:

> ... *I fear, if I rebel against my Lord, the retribution of an Awful Day.*
>
> (*Al-Anʿām : 15*)

1 ʿAbdul Hakam, p 128

2 Tabri, Vol VIII, p 98

Once ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAziz said to this servant: "Allah has favoured me with a disposition, insatiable and ambitious; no sooner do I attain an object I long for, I set my heart upon a still higher objective. Now I have reached a sublimation after which nothing remains to be coveted. Now my ambition aspires for Paradise alone."[1]

Once he asked a certain sage for counsel, who said: "Of what avail would it be to thee, if the entire mankind were sent to Heaven and thou were consigned to Hell? Similarly, what would thou lose, if thou were awarded Heaven and all others sent to the Hell?" On hearing this ʿUmar's qualm knew no bounds and he wept so bitterly that the fire in the chafing-dish in front of him got extinguished by his tears.[2] Yazid ibn Haushab once said that ʿUmar had so great a fear of God that it seemed as if the Heaven and Hell had been created by God only for him and Hasan al-Basri

If Providence had only granted ʿUmar the span of rule enjoyed by his predecessors, the world of Islam would have witnessed a complete and lasting revolution changing the course of its history. But the Ummayyads who had been hit hard during the reign of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAziz and who saw power and influence slipping out of their hands, openly regretted the day when the families of ʿUmar ibn al-Khattāb and the Ummayyads' had maritally been united. They could not endure the ordeal any longer for it was against their grain, and they soon found a way to get rid of the most virtuous Muslim of their times. ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAziz died in the middle of 101 A H after a rule of only two years and five months. There are reasons to believe that a slave in the employ of the Caliph was commissioned by his family to administer poison to him.[3]

1 ʿAbdul Hakam, p 61 and *Sifat us-Safwah*, Vol III, p 156
2 ʿAbdul Hakam, pp 108-109.
3 ʿAbdul Hakam, p 118, Ibn Kathir, Vol IX, pp 209-10 and *Sirat*, p 239

CHAPTER II

HASAN AL-BASRI

Atrophy of Faith and Moral Decadence :

After the death of ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbdul ᶜAzīz, there was a complete reversal of the State policy to the ways of his predecessors. *Jahilıyah* again returned with a vengeance to undo every reform ᶜUmar had introduced. Yazid II, who succeeded ᶜUmar, and his successors too, took full advantage of the position and power enjoyed by them to gratify the grasping demands of their kinsmen.

Hereditary and despotic rule along with the affluence of Ummayyads had by now begun to give birth to a nobility, hypocrite and time-server, spendthrift and libertine, whose morals and code of conduct were not different from the rakes of other nations Taking after the ways of the then nobility, pursuit of pleasure and gay abandon threatened to become the prevailing taste of the masses Moral and spiritual transformation, temperate and righteous living emanating from the true content of a faith, constitutes the most valuable heritage of prophetic teachings and a perennial source of vitality to the *Ummah*. But this-worldly attitude of life now threatened to inundate the warmth of spirit, faith and the awe of God thereby causing the failure of spiritual forces and atrophy of moral excellence. It was in truth a moment of great danger for the *Ummah* ; it appeared to be the beginning of the end. The State being callously indifferent to the virtues it ought to have upheld, blatantly nourished and encouraged its representatives who denigrated moral propriety and rectitude. The self-indulgent and luxurious ways of the elite were a standing allurement for the fast spreading vices like opulence, luxury and indolence The Prophet of Islam had flooded the heart of his followers with reverence, awe, complete submission and a living

relationship with the Almighty but these qualities were now on the wane It was a deficiency which could have never been redeemed by brilliant conquests or expanding dimensions of the empire, or, rather, as the history shows, the diminution of spirit is an irretrievable loss for any people who are once made to suffer its impoverishment

Had this reservoir of vitality and dynamic energy been left unattended to be crumbled and smothered by the then social and political forces of profanation, Muslims would have soon become a materialistic and self-indulgent people devoid of any conception of the life-after-death The Prophet of Islam had repeatedly expressed his anxiety, towards the end of his life, that Muslims might be swallowed by the pleasures of the world like earlier nations A few days before his demise, the Prophet had apprised his companions of this danger thus .

> "I have no apprehension from your poverty and indigence, what I fear is that the world might shower down its affluence and luxuries as it did on the people before you, and you might begin contending amongst you, thereby exposing yourself to the danger of being annihilated like the nations preceding you "[1]

Endeavours to Combat the Evil :

The danger to which the Holy Prophet had alluded was soon to manifest itself but its tide was stemmed by a few indefatigable crusaders of unflinching faith and ardent zeal. Endowed with religious devotion and enthusiasm, these pioneers and standard bearers saved millions in the *Ummah* through their sermons and exhortations, lectures and discourses, disciplines and teachings from being swept away by the flood of coarse materialism, they maintained the continuity of religious and spiritual traditions, teachings and precepts, which was assuredly much more important than the continued existence of political ascendancy Those who spearheaded the movement to fill in the gap at this crucial

1 *Sahih Muslim*, Vol II (*Kitāb-uz-Zuhd*), p 407.

moment in the life of the *Ummah* and thus saved the world of Islam from acquiescing in an utterly agnostic, characterless and spiritually enfeebled existence, were, Saʿeed ibn Jubair, Muhammad ibn Sireen, Shaʿbi and, the precursor of all, Hasan al Basri. Born in 21 A.H. his father Yasār, was an emancipated slave of Zaid ibn Thābit, a celebrated companion of the Prophet, and he was himself brought up in the house of *Umm-ul-Mominin*, Umm-i-Salmah

Capabilities of Hasan al-Basri :

Hasan al-Basri had been gifted with ennobling virtues and brilliant capabilities essential to make his exhortation for revival and renovation of Islam effective in his times He was distinguished for a disposition, amicable and considerate, winsome and enchanting, on the one hand, as also for his erudite and profound learning tempered with prudence and wisdom, on the other. In his knowledge of the Qurʾān and the Traditions he excelled all the doctors of his time. He has had the opportunity of being an associate of the companions of the Holy Prophet. It seems that he was also a keen observer of the contemporary events and the transformation Islamic society was undergoing ; for, he was fully aware of the ills, deficiencies and mal-practices that had crept in among the different sections of the society, and the measures necessary to eradicate them. He was also an equally celebrated orator inspired by deep ethical feeling. He held his audience spellbound. Whenever he discoursed on Hereafter or depicted the bygone age of the companions of the Prophet, everyone was seen brimming with tears Hajjāj ibn Yūsuf is rightly renowned for his eloquence but Hasan al-Basri was considered to be an equally good elocutionist. Abū ʿAmr ibn al-ʿAlāʾ, the famous grammarian and lexicographer says that he had not seen orators of greator eloquence than Hasan al-Basri and Hajjāj ibn Yūsuf but Hasan was more elegant speaker than Hajjāj [1] Of his encyclopaedic knowledge Rabiʿ ibn Anas says that he has had the

1 *Al-Bustāni*, Vol VII, p 44

privilege of being closely associated with Hasan al-Basri for ten years and almost everyday he found something new not heard of earlier in the discourses of Hasan [1] Describing the scholarly attainments of Hasan al-Basri, Abū Hayyān at-Tauhidi quotes Thabit ibn Qurrah

"In his learning and piety, forbearance and temperance, candour and large-heartedness, sagacity and prudence he resembled a bright star He was always surrounded by students seeking instruction in different branches of learning. He would be teaching *Hadith* (Traditions of the Prophet) to one, *Tafsir* (explanation or commentary on Qur'ān) to another, *Fiqah* (laws and theological rules) to a third, expounding a legal opinion to someone else and imparting instruction in the principles of jurisprudence to yet another while continuing his sermons in the meantime for those who came to him for the purpose His knowledge covered an expanse as vast as an ocean, or, he was like a dazzling lustre illuminating every soul around him. What is more, his heroic efforts to enjoin the right and to forbid the wrong, his undaunted championship of the righteous path before the elite, rulers and administrators could never be forgotten "[2]

The reason why Hasan's words carried weight with his audience was that he was not simply a preacher or an accomplished orator but that he also possessed a sublimated soul. Whatever he said was heart-stirring because it came from the depth of his heart, his speeches had a magnetism which no other scholar or mentor of Kufa and Basra could emulate Another distinguishing feature of his sermons was their affinity to the prophetic homilies

Al-Ghazali has written in *Ihya' 'Ulum id-Din* that there is a consensus of opinion that the teachings of Hasan bore a close resemblance with prophetic discourses as did his own conduct

1 *Al-Bustāni*, Vol VII, p 44

2 *Ibid*, p 5

with that of the companions of the Prophet—a quality which was lacked by other guides and missionaries.[1]

The enthusiastic devotion people paid to Hasan al-Basri and the irresistible attraction they felt towards him were the hall mark of his charming personality He was rightly considered as one of the few top-most guides of the *Ummah*. Thabit ibn Qurrah, a non-Muslim philosopher of the third century (A. H.), was of opinion that of the few eminent personages produced by Islam who could rightly be envied by the followers of other faiths, one was Hasan al-Basri. He adds that Mecca had always been a centre of Islamic piety and learning where accomplished scholars in every branch of learning converged from all parts of the world but even Meccans were dumbfounded by his scholarly attainments as they had never seen a man of his calibre [2]

Sermons of Hasan al-Basri :

The discourses delivered by Hasan are reminiscent of the simplicity and moral grit of the Prophet's companions. Speaking of the transitory nature of the world and human life, these sermons stress the significance of the Hereafter and final retribution, develop the meanings of faith and righteousness, inculcate awe and reverence of God and denigrate self-indulgence and licentiousness. In an age of crass materialism, when the rank and file and many of the elite too had taken to the gratification of bodily and sensual desires a haranguing on these very subjects was required Hasan has had the opportunity of being an associate of the Prophet's companions and, therefore, when he compares the moral degradation of the later Ummayyad period with the simplicity and unflinching faith, moral and spiritual excellence of the earlier times, his description becomes graphic and forceful, sparkling with the fire of his own heart-felt sorrow at the degeneration of the *Ummah*; he castigates, chastises and lashes out at the revolting change. At the same

1 *Ihya'*, Vol I, p. 68
2 *Al-Bustāni*, Vol VII, p 44.

time, the consummate diction, incomparable eloquence and unique lucidity of style secured for his sermons a distinguished place in the Arabic literature of the time Comparing the moral condition of his own times with that of the Prophet's companions and delineating the Islamic ethics, he observes

"Alas, people have gone to rack and ruin through their own fond hopes and daydreams , they talk but do not act ; knowledge is there but without endurance , faith they have, but no conviction , men are here, but without brains ; a crowd here is, but not a single soul agreeable to one's heart ; people come here simply to go away ; they acknowledge the truth, then deny it and make things lawful and unlawful at their sweetwill Is your religion a sensual delight ? If you are asked 'Do you have faith in the Day of Judgment?' You say : 'Yes ' 'But, No, it is not so' I swear by the Lord of the Day of Requital that your answer is wrong Its' only beseeming for the faithful that he should be sound of faith and a man of conviction His knowledge entails forbearance as moderation is an adornment for the learned He is wise but soft-hearted , well-dressed and restrained in order to conceal his indigence , never prodigal even if a man of substance , charitable and compassionate to the destitute , large-hearted and generous in giving to the kinsfolk their due , strenuous and unflinching in providing justice to others ; never crosses the prescribed limits in favouring his near and dear ones nor does he find fault or cull out the errors of those whom he dislikes A Muslim is indifferent to revilings and tauntings, frolics and sports, decrials and backbitings He never runs after what is not his right nor denies what he owes to others , never debases himself in seeking an apology nor takes delight in the misfortune or misdeed of others "

"Humble and submissive, devoted and enchanted, as a faithful is in his prayers, he is a messenger of cheer , his endurance is owing to the awe of God ; his silence is for meditation and reflection ; he pays attention for edification

and instruction; he seeks company of the learned for acquiring knowledge; keeps mum to avoid transgression; and if he speaks, he speaks to spread the virture. A Muslim is pleased when he acts virtuously; entreats forgiveness from the Lord when he goes astray, complains when he is aggrieved only to make up for the loss sustained; is patient and prudent when an illiterate joins issue with him; proves enduring when ill-treated, he is never unjust and never seeks succour or protection from anyone save God Almighty.

"Dignified in the company of their friends, praising God when they were left alone, content with the lawful gains, grateful when easy of means, resigned when in distress, remembering God Almighty among the indolent and craving the grace of God when among the pious. such were the companions of the Prophet, their associates and friends No matter what station they occupied in life, they were held in high esteem by their compatriots and, when they died, their spirit took flight to the blessed Companionship on High, as the most celebrated souls. O' Muslims, these were your righteous ancestors, but when you deviated from the right path, God Almighty too withheld his blessings from you. *Lo![1] Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts, and if Allah willeth misfortune for a folk there is none that can repel it, nor have they a defender beside Him.*[2]

On another occasion commenting on those verses of *Surah al-Furqān*[3] which describe the characteristics of the faithful, he says of the companions of the Holy Prophet:

"When the first Muslims heard this call from their Lord, they immediately affirmed it from the depth of their responsive heart They surrendered themselves implicitly

1 *Ar-Raʿad*, 11
2 Al-Basri, pp 66-70
3. Twenty-fifth Surah of the Qurʾān.

to the Most High; their hearts and eyes, nay, their whole existence, lived under a constant consciousness of the omnipotent power of God Almighty. By God, when I saw them, I could discern from their faces that the unseen realities taught by revelation were not beyond the ken of their perception—as if they had perceived these realities through their senses They never indulged in futile discussions or vain quibblings. They had received a message from the Lord and accepted it.

"Allah has Himself depicted their character in the Qur'ān thus: *The (faithful) slaves of the Beneficent are they who walk upon the earth modestly*[1] . . . The word used here for the faithful is symbolic, according to the Arab lexicographers, of their humility yet full of dignity. Thereafter the Lord says: *And when the ignorant address them, they say: Peace.*[2] It means that they are disciplined and patient and they never answer the arrogant and foolish in the same coin. If anyone joins an issue with them, they do not lose their temper or patience. They spend their days in acquiring knowledge from the learned. As for their nights, God has Himself spoken highly of what they do after the nightfall: *And who spend the night before their Lord, prostrate and standing.*[3] Verily, these bondsmen of Allah used to pass the whole night in prayers; they stood, tears flowing from their eyes, and then fell prostrate before the Lord, trembling with His awe. There was something, afterall, which kept them in vigils throughout the nights and made them yield to an implicit submission. The Almighty says that these are the persons who say: *Our Lord! Avert from us the doom of hell; lo! the doom thereof is anguish.*[4] The word signifying the torment of Hell in this verse is taken by lexicographers

1. *Al-Furqān*, 63.
2. *Ibid.*, 63.
3. *Ibid.*, 64.
4. *Ibid.*, 65.

to mean a chastisement or doom which never comes to a close i. e., it is an affliction which shall never end. I swear by Allah save Whom there is no other Lord, that the companions of the Prophet were really faithful; they acted on what they professed but, alas, you are after your fond hopes. Friends, do not lean upon your airy hopes, for God has never bestowed anything whether of this world or the Hereafter, upon anyone simply because he had longed for it."[1]

Thereafter he said (as he often used to remark after his discourses) that although his sermons lacked nothing, they were of little utility for the people who had lost the warmth of their hearts.

Fearlessness :

Hasan al-Basri was as much distinguished for his moral courage and unfaltered pursuit of justice as he was in the domain of erudition and oration He opposed the then Caliph, Yazid ibn ʿAbdul Malik,[2] in his presence when once someone asked Hasan to express his opinion about the two insurrectionists, Yazid ibn al-Muhallab and Ibn al-Ashʿath. Al-Hasan replied : "Don't be a party to the either faction". A Syrian, springing upon his feet, repeated the question "And not even to *Amirul-Mominin*?" Hasan replied angrily :" Yes, not even to *Amīr-ul-Mominin*".[3] The intolerable and ferocious cruelty of Hajjāj ibn Yūsuf[4] is

1. Al-Marwazi, p 12
2 He succeded ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz and ruled from the middle of 720 to January, 724 A D.
3. *Tabqāt*, Vol. VII, pp. 118-119.
4 Hajjāj, at one time governor of Hijaz, was ʿAbdul Malik's Viceroy over Iraq, Sijistan, Kerman and Khurasan Being one of the most ardent supporters of the Ummayyads, he did everything to strengthen their Caliphate His cruelty gave rise to several furious revolts During his long rule over Iraq, he put to death nearly 1,50,000 men, many on false charges, and some of them were the best of Arab race At the time of his death, 50,000 people were found rotting in his prisons.

proverbial but Hasan did not hold his tongue from expressing what he considered to be right and just even during the rule of Hajjāj.

Hypocrites :

The lightning success of the Muslim arms and the complete political domination of the Ummayyads over an extensive area had given rise to a class which had embraced Islam for the sake of material gains but had not been able to translate the ethics and precepts of Islam in its everyday life These people had still to go a long way to ENTER IN ISLAM COMPLETELY as the Qur'ān demands of every Muslim The younger generation of the Muslims, too, lacked education and training, who had inherited many customs and usages of the pagan past. They had accepted Islam but not surrendered themselves implicitly to the guidance of the revelation in their daily affairs, modes of living, deeds and morals. Quite a large portion of the Muslim society, particularly its elite and the ruling circles had gradually adopted the ways of *Jahiliyah* and, since they held the keys to political domination, riches and position of influence, they were emulated by the rabble of Basrah Self-indulgence, vanity, jealousy and lust for wealth and power were thus fast capturing the soul of the people

Some historians are of the opinion that *Nifāq* (hypocrisy) was a passing nuisance which had arisen owing to peculiar conditions obtaining at Madina during the time of the Prophet. They think that the mischief came to an end with the domination of Islam over paganism as the overriding ascendancy of the former left no room for any further struggle between the two. We find many a historian and commentator of the Qur'ān subscribing to the view that after a time there was no need for anyone to join Islam ostensibly but remain secretly disaffected, as the conditions had completely changed and people could openly make a choice between Islam and heathenism.

Those who hold this view, however, overlook the fact that insincerity is a human failing, as common and old as any other moral affection. It is not at all necessary that there should be

two contending forces of Islam and un-Islam to produce hypocrites who might follow the former whilst secretly opposing it. During a period of Islamic predominance too, there is very often a section which is not able to follow its tenets whole-heartedly; it claims to profess Islam but in the recesses of its mind and heart it has a lurking doubt whether Islam is really the sole repository of truth. Such persons do not possess enough moral courage to forsake Islam publicly, or, perhaps, the benefits they derive from the Muslim society or State do not allow them to renounce the religion in which they do not have an unflinching faith. These persons thus remain throughout their life, distracted and irresolute Expediency is the norm of such persons; in moral behaviour, selfishness, double-dealing, self-adornment, forgetfulness of the Hereafter, timidity before might and authority and eagerness to exploit the poor and the weak, they are lingering remnants of the hypocrites of earlier days referred to in the Qur'ān.

Indication of Hypocrites :

It is an achievement as well as a proof of Hasan al-Basri's insight that he could not only apprehend that hypocrisy still existed in the Muslim society but that it commanded considerable influence in the public life, especially amongst the ruling elite.[1]

1 Among the religious scholars of the later period, Shah Wali Ullah too subscribed to the view that hypocrisy is found in every age and that the existence of hypocrites is not a phenomenon peculiar to any particular time or place He believed hypocrisy to be of two types : hypocrisy in belief and hypocrisy in behaviour and morals The former is now not discernible or difficult to indicate owing to termination of the revelation after the final disseminator but the hypocrisy of behaviour and morals has been rampant ever since Speaking of his own times he says in *al-Fauz-ul-Kabīr* "Seek the company of the grandees and their associates if you want to see what hypocrites are like You will see that they prefer their own likings over the edicts of the law-giver In truth and reality, there is no difference between these persons and the fellows who personally heard the Prophet, yet practised hypocrisy All such persons act against the dictates of the law-giver after having ascertained the same, so on and so forth Rationalists too, who harbour many doubts in their hearts but forget the Hereafter, belong to the same category" (*al-Fauz-ul-Kabīr*, pp 13-14)

Someone asked Hasan if hypocrites were still to be found amongst the Muslims of those days His reply was

> "If hypocrites desert the streets of Basra, you will find it hard to live in the city "[1]

Hasan al-Basri meant that the majority consisted of those people who paid only a lip-service to Islam without allowing its precepts to take roots in the bottom of their hearts or translating its teachings into their moral behaviour. On another occasion he remarked -

> "Holiness be to God ! What hypocrites and self-seeking persons have come to have an upper hand in this *Ummah* "[2]

Hasan al-Basri's estimation of the then self-centered rulers who were least interested in Islam and the Muslims was perfectly correct

In his correct diagnosis of the canker eating into the body-politic of the *Ummah* lay the cogency of Hasan al-Basri's sermons and the call for reformation There were several outstanding pedagogues among his contemporaries but none could arouse the enthusiastic devotion of the people like Hasan His scathing criticism and denunciation of the degenerated state of society in fact shed light on the spirit and content of hypocrisy that had captured the soul of a large section of the populace Hypocricy was a malady fast taking roots in the Muslim society, Hasan elucidated the character, morals and behaviour of the hypocrites who could be seen in every walk of life—in administration, armed forces, business and trade For the prevalent vices were the lust for wealth and power and an utter disregard for final Retribution, Hasan gave himself up to the condemnation of these very evils and made people think of the eternal life after death With his gift of eloquence he vividly depicted the unseen realities which every hypocrite, indolent and prodigal wanted to be buried in oblivion

1 Faryābi, p 68
3 *Ibid* . p 57

For the call, preachings and sermons of Hasan challenged, indicted and denounced the aims and objects, designs and ambitions, longings and fancies of the age, it became difficult for the then society to ignore or remain indifferent to his haranguing. Innumerable people returned a changed man after hearing the sermons of Hasan and offered earnest repentance for the life of licentioussnes and self-indulgence they had led previously ; they made solemn affirmation of loyalty and obedience to God for the rest of their lives Hasan would urge his listeners to imbibe a true content of the faith and prescribe measures for the eradication of their vices He spent full sixty years in religious preaching and moral uplift of the people. It is difficult, for obvious reasons, to estimate the number of persons who were reformed and spiritually redeemed during this period. ʿAwwām ibn Haushab says that Hasan performed the same task for sixty years which prophets used to do among the earlier peoples.[1]

Death of Hasan al-Basri :

The immaculate sincerety, outstanding piety and the moral and spiritual excellence of Hasan al-Basri had earned the affection of everyone in Basra. When he died in 110 A. H., the entire population of Basra[2] attended his funeral which took place on Friday, so that for the first time in the history of Basra the principal mosque of the city remained empty at the hour of the afternoon (*Asr*) prayer.[3]

After the demise of Hasan, his disciples and spiritual proteges continued to disseminate the message of Hasan uninterrupted; they invited people back to religion, to the unflinching submission to the Almighty and cognition of the final recompense on the Day of Requital After twenty-two years of Hasan's death ended the

1 *Al-Bustāni*, Vol VII, p 44.
2 After Damascus, the capital of the Ummayyads, Basra was then the second largest city of the Islamic empire
3. Ibn Khallikān, Vol I, p 355.

rule of the mighty Ummayyads, giving place to the Caliphate of ʿAbbāsids who shifted the seat of the empire from Damascus to Baghdad.

Revolts Against Tyranny:

Along with the efforts directed towards propagation of the Faith and moral and spiritual renovation, attempts were also made, time and again, to re-organise the Caliphate in accordance with the political law of Islam and thus terminate the monopoly of political ascendancy enjoyed by the Ummayyads, and, later on by the ʿAbbāsids The Caliphate had unfortunately been organised by that time around such racial and tribal loyalties that no call to overthrow the established order could be effective unless it could also lay a claim to the noble lineage and was also backed by tribal fidelity. We, therefore, find that most of the persons who raised the banner of revolt against the Ummayyads and the ʿAbbāsids belonged to *Ahl-ul-bait*—people of the House of Muhammad—who could fire the much needed enthusiam for overthrowing the hated administration. Since they represented the religious urge for reform and renovation and also enjoyed the sympathy and support of the religious-minded people, they stood a fair chance to succeed in their enterprise.

After the massacre of Karbala[1] a number of descendants of the Prophet tried to bring about a revolution Husain's grandson, Zaid ibn ʿAli, attempted a rising against Hishām ibn ʿAbdul Malik which failed and Zaid was killed in 122 A. H. Imām Abū Hanīfa, founder of the Hanifite school of jurisprudence, apologised to Zaid ibn ʿAli for not being able to join in his expedition but contributed ten thousand *dirhams* for the army of Zaid[2] Thereafter

1. Husain, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad and son of Caliph ʿAli, was massacred along with his followers on October 10, 680 A D. at Karbala by an Ummayyad detachment for not taking the oath of fealty to Yazid ibn Muʿawiyah The butchery caused a thrill of horror in the world of Islam
2. Al-Kurdri, Vol I p 55

another descendant of Hasan, Muhammad Zun-Nafs-az-Zakiyah (b. ᶜAbdullah al-Mahz b al-Hasan al-Muthanna b. Hasan b. ᶜAli) raised the banner of revolt in Madina while his brother Ibrāhim ibn ᶜAbdullah rose against Mansūr in Basra. Imām Abū Hanīfa and Imām Mālik,[1] both founders of the schools of canon law, pronounced *fatwās* in favour of the validity of Ibrāhīm's claim to the caliphate and the former even extended financial assistance to him Imām Abū Hanīfa even dissuaded Hasan ibn Qahtaba, a general of Mansūr, from fighting against Ibrāhīm[2] These efforts were, however, also doomed to failure and Muhammad met with a heroic death at Madina on the 15th of *Ramadhan* 145 A H while Ibrāhīm was killed during the same year at Kufa on the 24th of *Zul-kaᶜada*. All these efforts turned out to be a dead failure owing to the armed strength and well established rule of the Ummayyads and the ᶜAbbāsids, yet, they set an example for the later generations to rise in revolt against tyranny and injustice. Despite their failures, the strenuous and uninterrupted efforts made by these heroes of Islam who, instead of submitting to the inducements of wealth and power, preferred to shed the last drop of their blood for the cause of justice and righteousness, have handed on a torch to the posterity that will ever keep its glowing spirit bright.

Of the believers are men who are true to that which they covenented with Allah

(al-Ahzāb · 23)

1 Imām Mālik advised the people of Madina to help Ibrāhīm even if they had taken the oath of fealty to Mansūr. (Al-Kamul, Vol V, p 214).

2 Some historians are of the opinion that the action taken by Mansūr against Abū Hanīfa was not owning to the latter's refusal to accept the post of Chief Cadi, but because of his taking sides with Ibrāhīm (Abū Hanīfa . p. 458)

CHAPTER III

THE TRADITIONISTS AND JURISTS OF ISLAM

The ʿAbbāsids :

The ʿAbbāsids were successors of the Ummayyads, not in political power alone, but also in the "this-worldly" attitude of life, hereditary and autocratic system of government, misuse of public funds for personal ends and rejoicing in the rounds of pleasure and dissipation If there was any difference between the two, it lay in the Arabian monopoly of high offices of the State under the former whilst under the later non-Arabs came to have an upper hand in the administration The vices peculiar to the Arabs under the Ummayyads had thus given place to the failings of the other nations The writ of the ʿAbbāsid rule ran over such an extensive area that once Harūn al-Rashīd remarked when he saw a cloud

> "Whereinsoever thou may ram, but a portion of the produce of thy shower will come back to me"

The annual income of the ʿAbbāsid Caliphate, as estimated by Ibn Khaldūn, was more than 7,500 *kintars* (7,01,50,000 dinars or 31,50,00,000 rupees) during the reign of Harūn al-Rashīd and it had increased manifold by the time of Mamūn The wealth and prosperity of the empire caused an influx into the capital, from the most distant parts, of the servile classes like musicians and singers, poets and jesters, in pursuit of their vocation of providing recreation to the sovereign, princes and grandees as did all sorts of manufactures and artistic creations to please the men of taste[1] Annalists have preserved an account of the marriage of Mamūn which illustrates the wealth and opulence,

1 Al-Jahiz Vol III, p 91 and Vol V, 115

pomp and pageantry, fascination and pleasure, surrounding the ʿAbbāsid sovereigns:

> "Mamūn along with his family, courtiers, nobles, army and civil chiefs, personal attendants, bodyguards and the entire army remained as a guest of his Prime Minister, Hasan ibn Sahl, to whose daughter he was betrothed Hasan entertained the whole company for seventeen days on such a lavish and gorgeous scale that even the meanest of the king's party lived like an aristocrat during the period Upon the members of the King's household and chief officers of the State were showered balls of musk and ambergris, each of which was wrapped in a paper on which was inscribed the name of an estate, or a slave, or a team of horses, or robes of honour, or some other gift, the recipient then took it to the treasurer who delivered to him the property which had fallen to his lot A carpet of surpassing beauty, made of gold thread and inlaid with pearls and rubies was unrolled for Mamūn. As soon as he was seated on it, precious pearls of unique size and splendour were again showered on his feet which presented a fascinating scene on the resplendent carpet".[1]

Some Preachers of Baghdad:

Amidst this life of dissipation and gay abandon there were a few inspired souls who, having detached themselves from all fascinations and immoral demeanours of the then society, had given themselves up to the propagation of the faith, self-purification, education and edification of the religious sciences The life-long object of these mentors was to protect and fortify the spiritual content of the community's faith, to forge a link between the Creator and the created and to expound and elucidate the teachings of the Qurʾān and the *Sunnah*. They upheld steadfastly the traditions of detachment, fearlessness and undaunted championship of the truth, for, the powers that be could neither

1 Al-Ma'mūn, pp 156-57 also *see* Ibn Khallikān Vol I pp 258-59

purchase them nor force them to give up the task they had taken upon themselves. Their seminaries were indeed heavens of shelter and safety in a tumultuous ocean of blasphemous materialism, domains of peace and tranquility were these, no less extensive or effective than the temporal kingdoms of the day If the kings and sovereigns had control over the body and flesh of their subjects, the writ of these mentors put the souls of the people into their hands There are not a few instances when these men of God were able to hold their own against the most powerful emperors. Caliph Harūn al-Rashīd was once on an official visit to Raqqa when the celebrated traditionist ʿAbdullah ibn Mubarak happened to go there The entire population of the city came out to receive him and no body remained to attend the king The multitude was so great that a large number of persons lost their shoes in the throng A maid servant of the Caliph who happened to watch the procession from the balcony, enquired who the celebrity was? When she was told that he was a religious doctor, ʿAbdullah ibn Mubarak, from Khurasān, she remarked "Verily, kingship is his and not of Harūn who dares not go anywhere without guards and orderlies[1]"

Baghdad of the ʿAbbāsid period manifested both the cross-currents, if on the one hand people of every calling and trade, desirous of fortunes and riches, amusement and gratification, had gathered in the city, there was also, on the other, a great influx of religious teachers and the taught from all over the world Baghdad had become such a great centre of the saints and the learned that the monographs and annals of the period give an impression as if none save the divines and pious souls lived in Baghdad and its environs resounded with the recollection and praise of Allah This atmosphere of piety and catholicity was due mainly to Sufyān Thauri[2], Fudhayl ibn ʿAyādh[3], Junaid

1 Ibn Khallikan, Vol II, p 238
2 d. 161/778
3 d. 187/803

Baghdadi[1], Maʿrūf Karkhi[2], and Bishr Hāfi[3] who had dedicated themselves to the propagation of the faith The moral rectitude and integrity of these masters, their kind-heartedness and sincerity, detachment and contentment, benevolence and readiness to make sacrifice for others had endeared them to all, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. They upheld and gave a practical demonstration of the Islamic morality with the result that countless Jews, Christians, Magians and Sabians who came into their contact embraced Islam [4]

The Two Urgent Problems :

It was imperative, truly at this juncture of Islamic history, to formulate and strengthen the norms of communal, social and political behaviour of the *Ummah*, in the same way as its moral and spiritual heritage had been protected and nourished in the past so as to ensure that Islam would ever continue to be the guiding light for coming generations, By that time the Muslim empire had become the most powerful and extensive kingdom of the day extending over almost the whole of Asia and parts of Africa and Spain in Europe New exigencies were arising as Muslims came into contact with the peoples in different lands ; problems relating to business and cultivation, poll-tax and land revenue, customs and rites of their vassals and liegemen were awaiting to be solved in accordance with the *Sharʿah* and its jurisprudence. It was simply not possible to set aside or defer anyone of these questions since the Islamic State stood urgently in need of a detailed and satisfactory answer to each of these issues, else it would have adopted Roman or Byzantine laws, codes and regulations for the conduct of its administrative business. Any complacency on the part of the then *ʿulema* would have produced the same confusion and waywardness as can be witnessed today under the so-called

1 d 297/910
2 d 200/815
3 d. 227/841.
4 For details *see* Ibn Khallikān : Vol I, pp 247-51 pp 323-24 , Vol II, pp. 127-28 ; Vol. III, pp 215-17 and Vol IV, pp 319-20.

present-day Islamic States The result might have been even more disastrous since the diffidence or negligence on the part of exegetists and traditionists at that crucial stage would have deprived the *Ummah* of its *raison d'etre* for thousands of years if not for all times to come. As a poet has said

"A moment's negligence makes the way a hundred years longer"

One of the two important problems requiring immediate attention was the collection and compilation of the Traditions of the Holy Prophet which had by then been taken down or committed to memory by a large number of traditionists spread all over the Islamic realm[1] The Tradition or the *Sunnah* was a major source of legislation as the details of the law were only hinted at or sometimes not explicity mentioned in the Qur'ān, and thus these constituted the only means of regulating the rules of conduct and safeguarding the Islamic character of the Muslim society In fact, the *Sunnah* comprises a minute record of twenty-three years of the Prophet's apostleship, transmitted by his companions, relatives and friends—the eye-and ear-witnesses. It is also a distinction not enjoyed by any other prophet[2] Apart from its educational and doctrinal value, the *Sunnah* is a reservoir of guidance for moral rectitude and spiritual uplift, of reverence

1 The collection and compilation of the Tradition had actualiy been taken up by the successors of the companions of Holy Prophet The active interest taken by ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz has already been referred to in these pages In the second century A H there existed numerous compilations of which those of Ibn Shahāb Zuhri (d 124 A H), Ibn Juraih Makki (d 150 A H), Ibn Is'haq (d 151 A H), Saʿeed Ibn Abi ʿArūba Madni (d 156 A H), Muʿmar Yamani (d 153 A H) and Rabʿi ibn Sabih (d, 160 A H) were more celebrated It was then necessary to subject to most minute scrutiny, classify and interpret the Traditions in accordance with the carefully determined norms of criticism

2 In so far as the Prophet enjoyed Divine guidance to give authoritative declarations on questions, moral, social or doctrinal, his Traditions really constitute a record of inspired sayings, and consequently occupy a totally different position to what is commonly understood by traditions in the Christian Church

and awe of God, of infusing people with a dynamic energy to fight the evil; and, it shall ever be producing standard-bearers who will fill the people with the true content of faith, enthusiasm and self-confidence, bring the people back to the fountainhead of Divine guidance and enable them to erase the accretions, deviations and innovations to their beliefs and practices

The other need of the hour was to collect, systematise and make analogical deductions in consonance with the teachings of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, to answer all possible questions of a sacred or secular nature The Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* provide, undoubtedly, guiding principles which can be applied to every stage of social and intellectual development of human beings, but, life being ever on the move, change is indispensable for human progress And this is why *Ijtihād* or analogical deduction of legal opinions under the inspiration of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* had become unavoidable to meet the new situations and necessities of the then expanding Islamic community

Compilation of Hadith (Traditions):

A mention must here be made of the Divine arrangements made for safeguarding the Traditions for God Almighty had selected for it a nation reputed for its memory, veracity and fidelity, whatever the companions of the Prophet saw or heard from him, they preserved the same with utmost care and transmitted it to the succeeding generations The memory of the prophets born amongst other peoples was preserved by the latter through sculpture and portraits but the companions of the Prophet of Islam, for whom representation in pictures and engravings had been prohibited, have left such a vivid and lively description of the appearance and deportment of the Prophet which not only dispenses with the need of picturisation but is also free from all its vices

Assiduity of the Traditionists:

Again, God Almighty provided Islam with hundreds of earnest scholars, peerless in prodigious memory and

intelligence, industry and enthusiasm, erudition and scholarly attainments, for the cultivation and development of the science of Tradition A large number of these, belonging to the non-Arab stock and coming from distant lands, set off on extensive travels all over the Islamic world in quest of the Traditions Indifferent to everything else, they devoted themselves to attending the lectures of the great doctors of theology and planning their work for collecting the Prophet's sayings and traditions about his acts and doings No other science, nor yet a people can claim to have had savants as devoted and zealous, and, at the same time, as meticulous and trustworthy as were the traditionists They moved heaven and earth to hunt for the Traditions from every corner of the Islamic world al-Bukhāri set off on his errand at the age of 13 and went all the way from Bukhara to Egypt, Abū Hatim Rāzi says that he traversed 3000 *farsankh* (9000 miles) on foot and thereafter left counting the mileage; Ibn Hairan of Andalusia (Spain) attended lectures of the doctors of Tradition at Andalusia, Iraq, Hijaz and Yaman wading through the whole of North Africa from Tanja to Suez and then across the Red Sea to Yaman A large number of traditionists have left accounts of their travels covering Asia, Africa and Europe (Spain).[1] As a matter of fact, it was not uncommon in those days to tread from Andalusia in Europe to Khurasan in Central Asia for the sake of acquiring knowledge from the reputed doctors of theology in different cities

Dictionary of Biography:

These savants did not simply collect and compile the Traditions but they also made researches in regard to the narrators of the Traditions, their integrity, truthfulness, moral and spiritual excellence In this way an account of the lives of all those transmitters of the sayings or doings of the Prophet, who had had the promise of "an exalted fame" by the Lord, came to light All these hundreds of thousands narrators became known to the

1 *Ulma-i-Salaf*, pp 20/22

posterity since they had handed down a Tradition or part thereof, thereby bringing into existence another science known as *Asma'ur-rijāl* This branch of knowledge is a living monument of the deep erudition and scholarly attainment, bent for research and the sense of responsibility, intellectual acumen and lofty idealism of the people inventing it In truth and reality, the *Ummah* can rightly feel proud of their achievement In his introduction to Hafiz Ibn Hajar's *al-Isābah-fi-Tamīz-is-Sahābah* Dr. A Sprenger has paid a glowing tribute to the savants of the Traditions :

> "The glory of the literature of the Mohammadans is its literary biography There is no nation, nor has there been any which like them has during twelve centuries recorded the life of every man of letters If the biographical records of the Musalmans were collected, we should probably have accounts of the lives of half a million of distinguished persons, and it would be found that there is not a decennium of their history, nor a place of importance which has not its representatives "[1]

Trustworthiness of the Traditionists :

The traditionists did not simply narrate the biographical accounts of the transmitters of Traditions, they took every conceivable care to record absolutely authentic memoirs in regard to the character and disposition, integrity and prudence, knowledge and retentive memory of the narrators They gleaned all available information about the narrators gathered from their contemporaries, without any partiality, fear or favour, no matter whether the narrator was a pious and illuminated soul or a ruler One of the annalists says

> 'The matchless courage exhibited by the traditionists in subjecting the narrators of Traditions to an impartial and close scrutiny can justly claim a pride of place in the annals of Islamic peoples There were numerous caliphs and commanders noted for their despotism,

1 Sprenger : Vol 1, p 1

among the narrators, but the Traditionists assigned them that very rank which they deserved Imām Wak^{c}ee was a reputed Traditionist but his father was a treasurer under the employ of the State Therefore whenever Wak^{c}ee had an occasion to relate a Tradition handed down by his father, he accepted the same if it was supported by another reliable narrator and rejected it if nobody in support of his father was to be found Such a conscientious and cautious lot were these Traditionists "[1]

Mas^{c}ūdī was a Traditionist He was paid a visit in 154 A H by another traditionist, Ma^{c}ādh ibn Ma^{c}ādh, but as the former took the help of his memoirs, Ma^{c}ādh rejected his Traditions on the ground of his weak memory[2] Ma^{c}ādh was once offered ten thousand *dinars* simply for remaining silent in regard to the reliability or otherwise of a witness He refused the offer contemptuously saying that he could not suppress an evidence[3]

Retentive Memory of the Traditionists :

Most of the traditionists were the elite of Iranian and Turkoman stock a robust, vigorous and resolute people with a strong retentive memory in whom an ardent desire for acquiring knowledge had been kindled by Islam Like any other human faculty which grows strong or weak with its use or disuse, retentive memory too can be strengthened prodigiously Memory is losing its retentive power these days owing to the easy access to printed material, and now-a-days many people would find it difficult to believe the wonderful feats of strong retentive memory performed in the bygone days History bears witness to many an instance of unimpeachable veracity of prodigious retentive memory which is, however, by no means beyond human experience or unintelligible The fact is that an aptitude for the subject of study combined with continued application and profound interest in it produces

1 Tahzīb, Vol XI, p 130
2 *Ibid*, Vol VI, p 211
3 *Ibid*, Vol VI, p 431 and *Khutbāt-i-Madras*, pp 59-60

such a proficiency as appears to be prodigious or rather an intellectual marvel to the un-initiated

When al-Bukhārī[1] arrived at Baghdad, the doctors there thought of a novel device to test his memory They selected ten scholars who were assigned ten Traditions each and told to relate these to al-Bukhārī after affixing the introductory portion of one Tradition to the text of another [2] Each of these persons narrated the Traditions as decided earlier and asked al-Bukhārī to give his opinion about their authenticity Al-Bukhārī's reply about every Tradition narrated before him was that he had no knowledge of it Those who knew the reason got a cue while unawares smiled at him After everyone had narrated the Traditions apportioned to him, al-Bukhārī addressed the first enquirer and rehearsed all the Traditions narrated by him seriatim with the correct introductory portions and their adjunct texts Thereafter he turned to each questioner and recounted his Traditions one by one Everyone was dumbfounded at his wit and prodigious memory.[3]

Popular Enthusiasm :

The selfless devotion and care with which the traditionists addressed themselves to the study of the Prophet's *Sunnah*, aroused a general awareness and enthusiasm among the masses in regard to

1 Abū 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī (810-870) was born at Bukhara When still a youth he undertook the pilgrimage and remained for some time in Mecca attending the lectures of great doctors of theology Then he set off on extensive travels which throughout 16 years took him all over Islamic Asia Of a large number of Traditions he had collected, he finally selected 7 275 texts applying the most minute scrutiny His collection, which is divided into 160 books is entitled *al-Jami' al-Sahīh* (The Genuine Collection) and considered as the first and most authoritative of the Sihāh Sittah (Six Genuine Books) Al-Bukhārī died in a village near Samarkand where his tomb is a much visited place of pilgrimage

2 The introductory portion of a Tradition consists of the chain of narrators who saw or heard any saying attributed to the Prophet, while the text comprises the quotation of the Prophet's words

3 *Fatah-ul-Bari*, p 487

this branch of religious science People flocked to the lecture of the traditionists in thousands with an avid desire to benefit from these study circles It is related by the annalists that despite the huge crowds attending the lectures of the traditionists these meetings were more disciplined and tidy than the courts of the sovereigns

It is reported that the number of persons attending the lectures of Yazid ibn Harūn in Baghdad exceeded seventy thousand persons Caliph Mu'tasim b'illāh once deputed a trusted councilor to report the number of persons attending the discourse of 'Asim ibn 'Ali, a traditionist who lectured in a grove in the outskirts of Baghdad His estimate of the attendance was one hundred and twenty-four thousand people Another annalist Ahmad ibn Ja'far says that when Muslim[1] came to Baghdad he convened a meeting at Rahbah Ghassān for dictating the Traditions Seven persons were appointed to repeat what Muslim dictated Apart from the persons who came to listen the discourse a large number took down the Traditions from Muslim The inkpots counted after the dictation was over exceeded forty thousand Another doctor of repute, Faryābi had to employ three hundred and sixteen persons to repeat his discourses to the crowd attending his lectures It is estimated that about thirty thousand persons attended his lectures of which ten thousand took down the notes of his dissertations[2] Al-Farabri reports that ninety thousand persons heard al-Jam'e al-Sahih personally from al-Bukhāri[3]

Sihah Sittah :

Unprecedented popular enthusiasm, devotion and ardent desire for the cultivation of religious sciences was helpful in securing an authentic and trustworthy collection of the Traditions which is undoubtedly a valuable asset and a storehouse of guidance

1 Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj (819-874) was compiler of one of the six canonical collections of *Hadith* called *al-Sahih* *Muslim's Sahih* and al-Bukhāri's work of the same title are the two most generally used of six most authentic collections of Traditions

2 *'Ulma-i-Salaf*, p 68.

3 *Fatah-ul-Bari*, p 492

for the *Ummah* Among the compilations of *Sunnah*, *Sahīh ul-Bukhārī* of al-Bukhārī and *Sahīh Muslim* by Muslim are held to be of undisputed authority, and the Traditions accepted by both are known as the "agreed ones" signifying a high degree of reliability [1] Other works, held in high esteem but taking their place after the collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, are *Muwatta* of Imam Mālik (d. 179 A H), Jam^{c}è of Imam Tirmizī, *Sunan-i-Abū-Daū'd* of Abū-Daā'd Sijistanī (d 275 A H) and the collections of Abū ^{c}Abdur-Rahmān an-Nasa'ī (d 303 A H) and Abū ^{c}Abdullah Muhammad ibn Mājah (d 273 A H) All the later movements for reformation and regeneration in Islam owe their existence to the endeavours made by the traditionists as no effort can succeed even now without drawing inspiration from these beacons of light

Compilation of Jurisprudence :

Like the Traditions, the codification of canons regulating the public and private life, amplification of the *corpus juris* and deduction of the rules for giving decisions in legal matters were the problems to be tackled immediately Islam had set foot on far off lands of Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Iran and other countries where its impact on local habits, customs and usages had given rise to many complicated problems Now, in order to solve these problems in consonance with the spirit of Islam, it required a deep knowledge of the conditions obtaining in these countries, customs and traditions of the different sections of society, patterns of human behaviour, a penetrating intellect and prudence along with a command over the Islamic lore, the Qurā'n and the *Sunnah*, history and lexicon of the Arabs

1 Shah Wali Ullah writes in *Hujjat-Allah-il-Baligha* "Traditionists agree that all the connected Traditions reported to have been related or performed by the Prophet himself and reported in these two collections are undisputedly correct for the chains of narrators given in these books are complete Anyone who denigrates these compilations is an apostate and a dissenter" (*Hujjat*, Vol I, p 139)

The Four Jurists of Islam :

Islam was fortunate to have been favoured again by God with paragons of intelligence and knowledge, earnestness and trustworthiness, who came forward for the service of *Ummah* in this field Among these men of mark, the four founders of juristic schools, Nᶜūmān ibn Thābit Abū Hanīfā (d 150 A H.) Abū ᶜAbdullah Mālik ibn Anas (d 179 A H) Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shāfeᶜī (d 204 A H) and Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d 241 A H), were highly esteemed scholars noted for their outstanding piety and service to the community, scholarship and understanding of legal matters These savants dedicated their lives to the noble cause they had taken up, set up a tradition of contentment and resignation and turned their backs upon all the inducements of wealth, power and position Abū Hanīfā twice refused the high office of Chief Justiceship offered to him by the then Caliph and was cast into prison where he died on account of the corporal punishment inflicted upon him Mālik ibn Anas was flogged[1] so severely that his shoulder-blade got dislocated Al-Shāfeᶜī withdrew himself from the world, became indifferent to its concerns and led a life of self-abnegation and sublime asceticism resulting in irreparable loss to his health Ahmad ibn Hanbal set his face against the official school of the then prevalent theology He was tried before a court of inquisition and thrown into prison but he steadfastly held to the tradition of orthodox school Each one of these jurists left voluminous treatises on law and legal dicta as can hardly be produced even through an organised effort Abū Hanīfā is reported to have elucidated eighty-three thousand[2] juristic-theological issues of which thirty-eight thousand pertained to acts of devotion and prayer and

1 The point at the issue was whether the divorce given under compulsion is effective or not The Caliphs in those days used to take the oath of fealty from the populace with an stipulation that if they broke the oath their wives would automatically be divorced Imam Mālik's legal opinion that divorce given under compulsion was ineffective made the stipulation in the oath of fealty ineffective thus causing unrest in the official circles

2 *Zuhal Islam* Vol II p. 188 and *Al-Makki*, p 96

forty-five thousand to transactions, rights and duties owed by one Muslim to another Another authority, al-Kurdari, writes that the total number of Abū Hanifā's legal opinions was six lakhs [1] *Al-Mudawwanah*, the collection of religious and judicial sentences of Mālik ibn Anas, contains thirty-six thousand decisions [2] The collection of writings and lectures of al-Shāfeʿī known under the title of *Kitāb al-Umm*, runs into seven bulky volumes The decisions of Ahmad ibn Hanbal were compiled by Abū Bakr Khallāl (d 311 A H) in forty volumes [3]

Disciples of the Four Jurists :

The founders of Juristic schools luckily got successors and disciples who not only compiled and edited the compositions of their masters but also made improvements and additions to them Among the alumni of Abū Hanifā was Abū Yūsuf, an eminent legal bram and Chief Justice of Haiūn al-Rashīd, who produced a treatise of great erudition like *Kitāb ul-Khirāj* on the principles of Islamic economy. His other disciples included illustrious writers and jurists of Muhammad and Zufai's fame who firmly established and popularised the Hanafite school of jurisprudence ʿAbdullah ibn Wahāb, ʿAbdur-Rahman ibn al-Qāsim, Ash'hab ibn ʿAbdul ʿAziz, ʿAbdullah ibn Abd al-Hakam, Yahiya ibn Yahiya al-Laithi were disciples of Mālik ibn Anas, who propagated the Mālikı system in Egypt and North Africa. Al-Shafeʿī was fortunate to have Buwaiti, Muzani and Rabʿi as compilers, editors and codifiers of his legal decisions Ibn Qudāmah, a research scholar and accomplished writer, was the principal pupil of Ahmad ibn Hanbal He wrote a celebrated book entitled *al-Mughni* which occupies a pride of place in the Islamic juristic works

Advantages of Fiqah :

The fact that jurists of redoubtable scholaiship were born in the first few centuries of Islamic era bespeaks of the vitality and

1 Al-Kurduri, p 144
2 *Zuhal Islam* Vol II, p 215
3 Shazrāt, Vol II, pp 261-62

inherent capability of the *Ummah* The endeavours of the jurists supplied a frame-work for manifestation of the Islamic ideals of ethical precepts in day-to-day affairs of the people and protected them from intellectual confusion and social anarchy which has brought many nations to wrack and rum in their initial stages The jurists founded the Islamic legal system on a firm ground and formulated its canons in such a way that it could always solve new problems confronting the *Ummah* in future and provide a pattern of behaviour in consonance with the spirit of Islam

CHAPTER IV

AHMAD IBN HANBAL

Metaphysics :

Muslims became conversant with the Greek intellectual patrimony in the beginning of the second century A H. The philosophical thought of the Greeks was nothing more than an intellectual sophistry and a play upon words devoid of any content of reality The concepts and ideas of man, limited as they are, find expression in his language which is wholly inadequate to delineate the nature and attributes of the Limitless Being The nature of God, His attributes, His creativeness, and similar other questions do not admit of an analysis and experimentation similar to those of tangible objects nor yet of a rational explanation, if only, because man does not possess the rudimentary knowledge or the basic precepts and experiences in regard to these matters, while the entire structure of his thoughts, ideas and imagination rests on sensory perceptions. Divine revelation through His apostles is, in reality, the only means of acquiring knowledge with certitude in this respect, for it can alone provide mankind with the gnosis of Supreme Being and His attributes Trust in the prophets, therefore, bespeaks of prudence and sound intellect. Muslims possessed the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* which provided an answer to all intellectual and spiritual questions and left no excuse for plunging into philosphical speculations. The companions of the Prophet, their successors, jurists and traditionists had all taken the same stand Also, Muslims were in the beginning too much occupied with the dissemination of their faith, the conquests that had brought to the fore numerous problems relating to affairs of private and social

life which had to be patterned in accordance with the ethical norms of Islam, and the compilation of religious sciences. However, with the translation of Greek and Syriac works and a close contact with the scholastics, philosophers and scholars of other peoples, a section of the Muslims began to take interest in the so-called rational and intellectual interpretation of the revealed truth These people, not content with a realistic and direct answer available in the Scriptures to the spiritual questions, which was in fact more satisfying to an intellect, deep and well-grounded, were attracted by the sophism of philosophical speculation And the result of their endeavours was that futile controversies pertaining to the nature and attributes of God, eternal or accidental nature of His word, vision of God through corporeal eyes predestination and free-will were started, although these were neither necessary for theological purposes nor had any utility for cultural or social advancement These discussions had definitely a dissolving influence on the solidarity of the *Umnah* and were injurious to its grit and tenacity.

Mu'tazilaism :

The Mu'tazilites, at the head of this group of religious philosophers, were regarded as rationalists and dialecticians since they had made philosophical speculation a touchstone of faith and apostasy. They endeavoured, with all the wits at their command, to reconcile religion with philosophy, faith with the so-called reason, while jurists and traditionists, on the other hand adhered to doctrinal tenets of their predecessors and considered these quibblings not only futile but harmful for the *Umnah* *'Itzāl* did not take root till the reign of Harūn al-Rashid but in the time of Mamūn, who was very much impressed with the Greek thought and its rationalism owing to his upbringing and for certain other reasons, the star of the Mu'tazilites rose on the horizon Ibn Abi Duwād an ardent propagator of *'Itzāl* and the Chief Justice of the 'Abbāsid Empire, exerted his influence to make it a state religion Mamūn, who was himself a zealous exponent of the Mu'tazilite school, had the impatience of a youth and the

obstinacy of an autocrat sovereign[1] He made it possible for the Mu'tazilites to exercise undue influence over the whole empire

The doctrine of the creation of the Qur'ān[2] was held as the basic tenet of the Mu'tazilite school which was sought to be enforced by invoking the power and influence of the state, and was made a criterion for determining one's apostasy or adherence to the true faith This brought forth a vehement opposition from the traditionists with Ahmad ibn Hanbal spearheading the opposition movement

Ahmad ibn Hanbal :

Ahmad ibn Hanbal was born at Baghdad in the month of of Rab'i ul-Awwal, 164 A. H He came of an Arab tribe, 'Shaiban,' which was renowned for its courage and endurance, grit and vigour[3] His grandfather, Hanbal ibn Hilāl had

1 A few examples of his rashness are furnished by his declaration of the preferance of 'Ali over the first three Caliphs and of the validity of marriages contracted for a limited period which caused considerable resentment among the masses He had afterwards to retrace his steps on the intervention of Yahya ibn Aktham (*Zuhal Islam*, Vol III, p 165 and *Ibnū Taifur*, p 45)

2 The controversy in a regard to the creation of Qur'ān—its being created or being eternal—was entirely a philosophical speculation, which, even according to the Mu'tazilite historians, served only to shake the faith in the divine origin of the Qur'ān Traditionists, holding the interpretations of the Mu'tazilite school to be wrong and harmful for the *Ummah*, opposed them The Mu'tazilites are commonly regarded as rationalists and progressive but they proved to be the most turbulent sectarians since they endeavoured to stifle all opposition to their creed They filled the entire world of Islam with a rancour and fanned the flame of hatred between different sections of the populace The manner in which they dealt with their opponents is reminiscent of the courts of Inquisition set up by the Christian Church during the Medieval Ages for the repression of the liberal thinkers, and which ultimately gave a death blow to 'Itizāl.

3 The famous Commander of Caliph Abū Bakr, Muthanna ibn Hāritha belonged to the same tribe

migrated from Basra to Khurasan and was appointed as Governor of Sarakhsh under the Ummayyads but he was sympathetic to the ʿAbbāsid propaganda to supplant Bani Hashim, the descendants of the Prophet, in place of the Ummayyads. After his father's death, his mother migrated to Baghdad where Ahmad was born Although placed in straitened circumstances, his mother took pains to provide him with the best possible education. Ahmad too, being at the end of his tether, learnt to be industrious and patient, resolute and self-restrained He committed the Qurʾān to memory when still young, studied literature for some time and then enlisted in an office to gain proficiency in the penmanship

Ahmad was virtuous and of clear conscience from his very childhood His uncle held the post of an official reporter at Baghdad and used to send despatches to his superiors about the affairs of the city Once he handed over a bundle of his despatches to Ahmad for being delivered to a courier, but Ahmad threw these away in the river as he thought that these would be containing secret reports about certain persons While he was working as an apprentice in the correspondence-office, many house-wives whose husbands were out on military duty came to get their letters read out to them and replies written on their behalf Ahmad would oblige them but he would never write anything which he considered to be undignified or against the *Shariah* It was on account of these distinctive qualities that a foreseeing individual (Haitham ibn Jamil) had predicted that if "the youngman remained alive, he would be a model for his compatriots "[1]

In religious sciences, Ahmad paid special attention to the Traditions In the beginning he took notes of the Traditions from Abū Yūsuf[2] and then studied for four years under a famous traditionist of Baghdad, Haitham ibn Bashir[3] (d 182 A. H.).

1 *Tarjumatul Imām*, p 16
2 *Manāqib Imām Ahamd*, p 23
3 *Ibid*, p 23

During this period he also received education from ʿAbdūr Rahman ibn Mahdi, Abū Bakr ibn ʿAiyyāsh and a few other reputed teachers of *hadith* He was such an industrious and avid student that often he wanted to leave the home for his studies so early in the morning that his mother had to beg him to wait till the call for the morning prayer was heard and the darkness had at least faded away.

After completing his education at Baghdad he set out for Basra, Hijaz, Yaman, Syria and al-Jazirah for attending the lectures of the reputed doctors of Tradition in these places

Ahmad ibn Hanbal met Muhammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfeʿī in 187 A H while on his first visit to Hijaz [1] He again met al-Shāfeʿī afterwards in Baghdad when the latter had elaborated the science of jurisprudence into a regular system and developed the doctrine of *ijmāʿ*. Ahmad had too acquired such a proficiency by then that al-Shāfeʿī used to depend on him in regard to the authenticity of the Traditions and often asked Ahmad to enlighten him in this regard

Ahmad wanted to set off for Ray in Iran for attending the lectures of a reputed traditionist, Jarīr ibn ʿAbdul Hamīd but could not go because of the paucity of funds He often regretted that if he had even ninety *dirhams* he would have left for Ray Another incident indicating his high-spiritedness in acquiring the knowledge of Traditions has been related by the annalists. In 198 A H he decided to repair to Hijaz and then, after performing the Hajj, to Sanʿā in Yaman for listening the Traditions from ʿAbdur Razzaq ibn Humām One of his class-mates, Yahyā ibn Maʿeen, also promised to accompany him However. when they were encompassing the Kaʿbah, they happend to meet ʿAbdur Razzaq ibn Humām. Ibn Maʿeen paid his respects to ʿAbdur Razzaq and introduced Ahmad to him' He also made a request to give them some time for learning the Traditions for him When ʿAbdur Razzaq had left, Ahmad told Ibn Maʿeen that it was not befitting for them to take advantage of the Sheikh's

1. Ibn Hambal, p 33

presence in Mecca to listen the Traditions from him. Although Ibn Maʿcen pleaded that it was a boon from God that the Sheikh's presence in Mecca had saved them from a lengthy journey of two months and the attendant hardships and expenditure, Ahmad refused to listen the Traditions from ʿAbdur Razzaq without having undertaken the journey to Sanʿā. He said · "I would feel ashamed before God, if I break the journey undertaken with the intention of learning the Traditions I would go to Sanʿā and attend the Sheikh's lectures there" After the Hajj was over, he repaired to Sanʿā and listened the Traditions handed down through al-Zuhrī and ibn al-Mussayyib from ʿAbdur Razzaq.[1] In due course of time he acquired a high reputation for his profound knowledge, particularly for his erudition with respect to the precepts, actions and sayings of the Prophet, of which he could repeat over a million. Despite his vast knowledge and prodigious memory, he had a high regard for al-Shafeʿī's intelligence, grasp and deductive method of reasoning He used to say of al-Shafeʿī "I have not seen anyone like him". Ahmad learnt the rules of jurisprudence from al-Shafeʿī and later developed his own doctrine of uncompromising adherence to the text of the Traditions as a source of law Ultimately he rose to be an eminent theologian and jurisprudent, and the founder of one of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence, which still has adherents in many parts of the Islamic world. Al-Shafeʿī too held Ahmad ibn Hanbal in high esteem While leaving Baghdad al-Shafeʿī had remarked "I am leaving Baghdad when there is none more pious and a greater jurist than Ahmad ibn Hanbal".[2]

Ahmad ibn Hanbal began his discourses on Traditions in 204 A.H , at the age of forty [3] This was perhaps God ordained or a re-echo of the Prophet's call to Islam since he had been graced with the prophethood at that age Quite a large number of persons used to attend his lectures Annalists report that five

1 Ibn-Kathīr, Vol X, pp 326-27 and *Manāqib Imām Ahmad*, pp 69-70
2 *Tarjumatul Imām*, p 16
3 Ibn Hanbal, pp 33

thousand or more persons attended his lectures out of which about five hundred used to take down his discourses People listened to Ahmad ibn Hanbal in pin drop silence for no body could dare to talk or do anything unseemly of the respect of Traditions The poor were given preference over the rich in his lectures Al-Zahabi quotes Marwazi, a contemporary of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, as follows

> "I have not seen the poor and lowly being shown more deference anywhere than in the lectures of Ahmad, who used to be attentive to the poor and indifferent to the affluent He was a man of towering dignity, of simple habits yet grave and never hasty, his countenance signified a weightiness and sublimity. He used to arrive for his lectures after *Asr* prayers, but remained quiet till he was requested to speak "[1]

Ahmad ibn Hanbal was extremely simple in his habits and led an almost ascetic life like the mentors of the old He never accepted any gift or present offered by the Caliphs or the grandees If his sons ever asked the reason for refusing these presents, he explained that the offerings were perfectly lawful and even Hajj could be performed from that money He refused to accept these not because of it being prohibited but owing to the dictates of prudence He managed to meet his expenses from the income of his ancestral fief or from his own earnings but despite his being financially hard-pressed he was very large-hearted and generous He often said that if the entire world became a morsel in the hands of any Muslim who fed another Muslim with it, this would not be lavishness He was not charitable in respect of wealth alone but exhibited the same virtue even when his own-self was involved Once a man abused and denounced him but soon came back to repent and offer his apology Ahmad replied that he had already forgiven him before leaving the place where the incident had occurred After enduring the tortures in connexion with his stand on the eternity of the Qur'ān, he forgave

1. *Tarjumatul Imām*, p 35, and *Hilyatul Auliya*, Vol IX, p 165

all those who were involved in his sufferings including the Caliph under whose orders he had been severely scourged He used to say "I cannot pardon the innovator in religion but excepting him everyone who took part in my victimisation has been pardoned by me" Often he said, "What advantage would anyone derive if a Muslim was a scourged in Hell because of him ?"

An incident illustrating the over-flowing charity and kindly disposition of Ahmad ibn Hanbal has been related by Ahmad Qattān al-Baghdādi who says that long after the wounds inflicted by the flogging had been healed, Ahmad ibn Hanbal often had a shooting pain in his back which was caused by a growth developed as a result of the severe scourging The physician who had treated Ahmad ibn Hanbal told al-Baghdādi that while examining Ahmad when he pressed the spot where the latter had pain, Ahmad simply said "I seek the refuge of God from it" Similarly, when the physician opened the spot to remove the concussion, Ahmad continued to seek forgiveness for Muʿtasim till the operation was over After dressing the wound the physician asked Ahmad ibn Hanbal "Abū ʿAbdullah, when people have to face a calamity on account of someone else, they normally accurse him but you were invoking divine blessings for Muʿtasim ?" "I too thought of it", replied Ahmad, "but Muʿtasim is a descendant of the Prophet's uncle and I do not want to cherish a feud with one of the relatives of the Prophet when I face him on the Day of Judgement I, therefore, decided to forgo my claim against him"[1]

Despite his high reputation and profound knowledge, never a word of self-praise was heard from him One of his associate, Yahyā ibn Maʿeen says

> "I have not seen a man like Ahmad I had been associated with him for fifty years but he never showed off his erudition"[2]

1 *Randha-tul-ʿUqlaʾ*, pp 156-57

2 *Hilyatul Awliya*, Vol IX p 181

Modest as he was, Ahmad never liked to mention his hneage although he descended from a celebrated Arab tribe, and that was considered to be a great honour m those days Al-Zahabi has recorded an incident related by one of Ahmad's compatriots which throws light on his singular humility

> "ᶜĀrim Abū-Noᶜamān says . Ahmad ibn Hanbal had asked me to keep some funds in deposit out of which he used to draw amounts in accordance with his needs. Once I said : 'Abū ᶜAbdullah, I know you are an Arab.' To this he replied · 'What ! we are destitutes.' I insisted on a reply but he evaded the answer[3]".[1]

After the persecution Ahmad ibn Hanbal had to undergo for his stand on the question of the creation of Qurᶜān, he obtained so high a reputation for his sanctity that countless people offered prayers for divine blessings on him Ahmad ibn Hanbal, however, felt terribly worried and uncertain. Once Marwazi, one of his disciples, told him : "A large number of people solemnly invoke the divine blessings on you."

"How do you say so ?", Ahmad exclaimed, "I actually fear punishment m the shape of divine benefits that are sometimes conferred on ungrateful sinners".

Marwazi replied, "A man has come from Tarsūs who says that he was present on a battle-field in Rūm[2] when he heard suddenly cries raised from every nook and corner of the place imploring benediction in your favour. He further relates that the soldiers fired ballistas as if on your behalf and once it so happened that when a ballista was thus fired, the missile hit an enemy taking position behind a cover on the wall of the fort, cleanly blowing away both the cover and the head of the enemy".

Horrified on hearing this, Ahmad exclaimed, "O God, let this not be a delusive favour from Thee.".[3]

1. *Tarjumatul Imām*, p 22.
2 The land of the Byzantians.
3 *Tarjumatul Imām*, p 21

Very often non-Muslims came to meet him from distant places A Christian physician once visited him in connexion with his treatment He said, "I wanted to meet you since a long time. You are a blessing not for the Muslims alone but for all the human beings All of our friends and co-religionists have similar feelings for you"

When the physician had left, Marwazi said, "I hope that the entire Muslim world would be beseeching divine blessings for you".

Ahmad, however, replied, "When a man happens to know his worth, no adulation can deceive him "[1]

Notwithstanding his profound humility, Ahmad ibn Hanbal had been endowed with a personality so solemn and overbearing that even the state officials, administrators and soldiers felt over-awed in his presence and could not help paying respect to him An eye-witness reports that he had been to the Governor of Baghdad Is'haq ibn Ibrāhim, and several other high-ranking officers but he did not find anyone so domineering as Ahmad ibn Hanbal. He says that he wanted to seek certain clarifications from Ahmad but he found himself in a flutter—the blood knocking in his temples, he was unable to speak in the presence of Ahmad. A reputed traditionist Ibrahim al-Harbi (d. 285 A H.) says :

> "I have seen Ahmad ibn Hanbal. It seemed as if his heart was a repository of all the knowledge vouchsafed to human beings, past and present ; he brought forth whatever he wanted and held back what he did not desire to divulge."[2]

Ahmad ibn Hanbal led a life so simple and frugal that it was envied even by the ascetics. The reign of the first three ʿAbbāsid sovereigns of his time, Mamūn, Muʿtasim and Wāthiq, constituted a trial for Ahmad since each one of these was bent on putting

1 *Tarjumatul Imām*, pp 21/22

2. *Ibid* , p 16, and *Manaqib Imām Ahmad*, p 15

him to harm Wāthiq was succeeded by Mutawakkil in 232 A H who held Ahmad in high esteem, but Ahmad was far more afraid of him since he took the favours of the Caliph as a temptation to evil Often he said that he was able to withstand the sufferings inflicted by the earlier Caliphs, but in his old age, he had to face another trial which was far more severe The respect and deference, favours and gifts of Mutawakkil could not, however, make any inroad into the contentedness and resignation of Ahmad just as the threats and sufferings at the hands of earlier Caliphs had failed to deter him from the path enjoined by the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Once Mutawakkil sent him a donkey-load of gold-pieces but he refused to accept the same The man who had brought the present insisted on his accepting the money and implored that the Caliph would take ill if the present was refused At last Ahmad consented to let the bag being placed in a corner Ahmad, however, called on his uncle late in the night and asked him to advise as to what he should do with the money since he deeply regretted that he had accepted the present, and could not sleep on account of it. His uncle advised him to wait at least till the day-break and then to dispose it of in the manner he liked best Early next morning Ahmad collected his trusted disciples and associates and asked them to prepare a list of the poor and indigent persons He distributed the entire amount and then gave away the bag to a destitute [1]

Ahmad ibn Hanbal remained a royal guest, on the insistence of Caliph Mutawakkil, for a few days During this period he was served with sumptuous dishes, which were estimated to cost one hundred and twenty *dirhams* per day Ahmad, however, did not touch the food and kept fasting continuously for eight days He became too weak, and, as it is reported, if the Caliph had not sent him back soon thereafter, he would have probably died [2] ʿAbdullah, Ahmad's son, says that his father remained with the Caliph for sixteen days During this period he took only a little

1 *Tarjumatul Imām*, p 60

2 *Ibid*, p 61.

parched grain reduced into paste Mutawakkil had sanctioned stipends for the sons of Ahmad. One of his sons reports that prior to their being stipendiaries, Ahmad had no objection to accepting anything from them but he completely discontinued the practice thereafter. Once, when Ahmad was ill, a physician prescribed water extracted from parched pumpkin for him. Ahmad was advised by someone to get the pumpkin parched in the oven of his son Saleh which happened to be burning at the time, but Ahmad refused to do so.[1] Although he was extremely cautious for his own self, he still felt uneasy in regard to the stipends received by his sons, and ultimately he told Saleh : "I want that you should forsake the allowance for you are getting it on account of me"

Ahmad fell seriously ill at the age of 77. The number of people who daily came to see him was so large according to the chroniclers of his time that all the streets of the Bazar near his house were overcrowded and police had to be posted there to control the traffic.[2] Ahmad was suffering from haematuria and the reason attributed to his illness by the physicians was that grief and anxiety had produced an ulcer in his stomach.[3] Marwazi says that Ahmad's condition deteriorated on Thursday. Although he had unbearable pain, Ahmad asked Marwazi to help him perform the ablution. He was so particular about it that he instructed Marwazi to pass his fingers between the toes On Friday night Ahmad's malady grew still worse and he died the next day, on Friday, the 12th of Rabi'-ul-Awwal, 241 A H [4]

Dispute regarding the Nature of the Qur'ān :

Caliph al-Mamūn applied himself vigorously to the task of spreading the doctrine of the Mu'tazilites about the nature of the

1 *Tarjumatul Imām* pp 63,64.
2 *Ibid*, p 77.
3 *Ibid* p 77.
4 *Tarikh-i-Kabir*, Vol II, Part I, p 6 ; *Tarikh-i-Sagir*, p 244 ; and *Tarjumatul-Imām*, p 76

Qur'ān, who held it to be a creature rather than an eternal word of God In Mamūn's judgment, any deviation from this doctrine was worse than treason, and therefore, he issued a detailed mandate to the Governor of Baghdad in 218 A H severely criticising the dogmatism of the populace, particularly traditionists. He described them as noisy and turbulent sectarians lacking in true faith, unreliable witnesses and reactionaries of the *Ummah* He ordered that all those officials who did not subscribe to the tenets expounded by him should be dismissed under intimation to him [1]

The royal edict was issued four months prior to the death of Mamūn Its copies were despatched to the governors of all dominions who were instructed to summon the leading doctors and jurists, under the employ of the State, and to test them in the fundamentals of the doctrine and to dismiss those who did not accept the M'utazilite viewpoint

Thereafter Mamūn issued another order to the Governor of Baghdad asking him to present before him seven reputed traditionists of the city who were opposed to the doctrine [2] When they came, Mamūn questioned them about his dogma regarding the creation of the Qur'ān Each one of them, either from conviction or as a matter of expediency, expressed his agreement with the views of the Caliph and was allowed to go back. They were also asked to express their views in public meetings convened for the purpose but the masses remained unaffected, holding the orthodox view

A few days before his death, Mamūn issued a third rescript to Is'haq ibn Ibrahīm, expounding the doctrine in still greater detail, and enlarging its scope to test all the doctors of religion along with the officials of the State He made it compulsory for everyone to subscribe to the tenet Is'haq convened a meeting of all the reputed doctors, asked their views about the royal dogma and reported back their answers to the Caliph. Mamūn was in

1 Tabri, Vol X pp 284/93 and Ibn Taifūr pp 181/86
2 Ibn Taifūr, p 183

taken a vow that he would not execute him but have him most severely scourged and confined in a dungeon where the Sun never arose Ahmad, however, did not yield and ultimately he was brought before Mu'tasim The Caliph ordered Ahmad to be given thirtyfour lashes A fresh executioner was brought after every two strokes but Ahmad said after getting each whip · "I will accept if you can bring anything from the Qur'ān or the *Sunnah* in your support"

Ahmad's Account of His Sufferings :

Ahmad ibn Hanbal has himself given an account of his sufferings in these words ·

> "When I reached the place known as Bab-ul-Bustān, a horse was brought before me and I was asked to get upon it Nobody helped me in mounting the horseback and with heavy chains fastened to my legs, I had to make many attempts I just managed somehow to save myself from falling down in these attempts When I reached the castle of Mu'tasim, I was thrown in a small room which was then bolted There was no lamp in the room and after midnight when I stretched my hands to touch the dust for purification before the prayers I intended to offer, I found a tumbler full of water and a basin I performed ablution and offered the prayers On the next day a page took me before the Caliph The Chief Justice, Ibn Abi Duwād, and a number of his courtiers along with Abū 'Abdur Rahmān al-Shafe'i were present there Just before I was presented before the Caliph, two persons had been beheaded I asked Abū 'Abdur Rahmān al-Shafe'i if he remembered what Imām al-Shafe'i had said about *Masah*.[1] Ibn Abi Duwād remarked on this · 'Look here ! This man is to be beheaded and he is making enquiries about the canons' In the meantime Mu'tasim asked me to come

1 Ritual purification with dust in place of water, when the latter is not available or is harmful for health, for offering prayers

why do you want to get rid of your life. God knows that I have a great regard for you'.[1]

One, Ujaif, stroked me with the handle of his sword and exclaimed: 'You want to carry all before you' Another man remarked, 'Don't you see that the *Amīr-ul-Momnīn* is standing before you', while a third ejaculated, 'Oh, *Amīr-ul-Momnīn*, you are keeping fast and standing in the sun'. Mu'tasim repeatedly beseeched me to acknowledge his dogma but every time, I repeated my earlier reply at which he flared up and ordered to scourge me harder till I became unconscious When I regained consciousness, I found that I had been unchained Someone present there told me that I had been pulled down on my face and then trampled upon However, I do not know what they had done to me" [2]

Firmness of Ahmad ibn Hanbal :

Ahmad ibn Hanbal was thereafter sent back to his house He spent 28 months in imprisonment and got 34 lashes Ibrāhīm ibn Mus'ab, one of the guards in whose custody Ahmad was kept, says that he had not seen anyone more courageous and brave than Ahmad, for he treated his guards no more than insects Another person, Mohammad ibn Isma'il, says that he had heard from certain eye-witnesses who said that Ahmad ibn Hanbal was scourged so severely that one stroke was enough to make an elephant cry out An eye-witness of Ahmad's scourging says that since the latter was keeping fast on the day, he said to him "The *Shari'ah* permits you to acknowledge the tenet of the Caliph in order to save your life But Ahmad did not pay any attention to me When he became too thirsty, he asked for some water A

1 The chroniclers of the time report that Mu'tasim wanted to set Ahmad free, but Ibn Abī Duwād exhorted him and said that if the Caliph forgave Ahmad, his action will be construed as going back on the policy laid down by his brother

2 Summarised from *Tarjumatul Imām*, pp 41-49

tumbler of ice-cooled water was brought which he took in his hand but returned."[1]

One of the sons of Ahmad relates that his father had the marks of scourging on his body when he died. Abul ᶜAbbās ar-Raqqi describes how certain people who wanted to save Ahmad of his sufferings, went to the prison where he was confined and recited the Tradition which allowed one placed in similar circumstances to save his life Ahmad replied, "But what do you say of the Tradition handed down by Khabbāb which says that there were people of the old who were sawed into two but they did not renounce their faith". Those people got disappointed with the reply of Ahmad for they knew tha. he would go through every trial and tribulation for the sake of his faith

Achievements of Ahmad ibn Hanbal :

The undaunted courage and steadfastness of Ahmad ibn Hanbal gave a death-blow to a sacrilege which had exposed the faith to a great danger. All those who had expressed their agreement, either from fear or expediency, with the views of the Caliphate, were exposed. All such savants were despised and held in contempt despite their erudition and learning On the other hand, Ahmad ibn Hanbal was received by the people with the most honourable marks of distinction, and affection for him became a mark and symbol of the orthodox school of Islam One of his compatriots, Ibn Qutaibah says :

> "When you find anybody setting his affections on Ahmad ibn Hanbal, you should know that he is a follower of the *Sunnah* "[2]

Another doctor, Ahmad ibn Ibrāhīm ad-Dauraqi held that

> "Be suspicious of the Faith of one whom you find irreverent to Ahmad" [3]

1 *Tarjumatul Imām*, p 112
2 *Ibid* , p 16
3 *Tarīkh-i-Baghdad* Vol IV p 420

CHAPTER V

ABUL HASAN AL-ASHARI

The Crisis of ʿItizāl :

Ascendancy of Muʿtazilites—The Muʿtazilites suffered a severe set-back after the death of Muʿtasim and Wathiq, both of whom were ardent supporters of their school Mutawakkil, the tenth ʿAbbasid Caliph, succeeded his brother Wathiq in 232 A. H. He was against the Muʿtazilites and keen for the restoration of the true faith He declared as heretic the allegedly free-thinking Muʿtazilites, expelled them from public offices and interdicted discussions on dogmatic questions by them. Yet, *ʿitizāl* had taken roots in the circles of the learned and the philosophers, all over the Islamic world Although the doctrine in regard to the creation of the Qurʾān had died-out, the Muʿtazilite thought still exercised considerable influence. The Muʿtazilites continued to be vigorous owing to the eminent exponents of *ʿitizāl* who were well-versed in literature, dialectics, jurisprudence and other sciences, and held high offices under the State They gained ascendancy by the middle of the third century A H when it was commonly held that they possessed rationalistic tendencies, were progressive thinkers and seekers after the Truth. This became the prevailing taste which was taken after by the youngmen, students and others who wanted to cut a figure. The Hanbalite school could not produce another savant of Ahmad ibn Hanbal's erudition while the traditionists and the teachers of orthodox school came to regard secular sciences as undesirable intruders into the domain of religion. The ignorance of orthodox theologians in dialectics and other secular sciences began to be regarded as their weakness with the result that the *ʿitizāl* acquired a predominance such as it had never gained before or after that period. It is true that all those

Abū ᶜAli al-Jubbāʾī was a successful teacher and writer but not a good debator while Abul Hasan ᶜAli al-Ashᶜarı was celebrated both for his wit and eloquence. During the debates on the doctrines of *ᶜitizāl*, al-Jubbāʾī used to ask him to contend with the opponents of his school Thus he soon earned a name for his mastry over the science of disputation and was recognised as a teacher of the Muᶜtazilite school of thought [1] It was expected that he would succeed his god-father and mentor and prove a still more vigorous and eminent exponent of the Muᶜtazilite doctrines. God had, however, willed otherwise.

Notwithstanding the fact that al-Ashᶜari had spent his life in the advocacy of the Muᶜtazilite school whose leadership was about to fall in his lap, Providence had selected him to vindicate the *Sunnah*. He began to see through the intellectual sophistry of the Muᶜtazilite school, its quibblings and hairsplitting, and ultimately realised that the specious reasoning of the rationalists was nothing more than an intricate yet well argued spell of words, ideas and thoughts but really inconsequential in so far as the search for Truth was concerned. It dawned upon him that the source of truth lay only in revelation ; the way of the teachers of the old and companions of the Prophet was the only Right Path, and that there was no reason why intellect should not submit to it Thus getting disenchanted from the Muᶜtazilite doctrines at the age of forty, he developed an intense dislike for the so-called rationalist school. He did not come out of his house for fifteen days. On the sixteenth day he went from his house to the principal mosque of the city. It was Friday and al-Ashᶜarı elbowed his way through the thronging crowd of the faithful. Going straight to the pulpit and ascending its steps he started to proclaim :

"Many of you know me. I want to tell those who do not know me that I am Abul Hasan ᶜAli al-Ashᶜari. I was a Muᶜtazilite and believed in their doctrines. Now I seek repentance from God and turn away from my earlier

1. *Tabᶜeen*, p 117

beliefs, henceforth, I shall endeavour to refute the doctrines of the Muᶜtazilites and lay bare their mistakes and weaknesses "[1]

And from that day on al-Ashᶜari devoted himself wholeheartedly to the repudiation of the Muᶜtazilites and began propounding the tenets of the orthodox school With his profound knowledge, penetrating intellect, eloquence, mastry over dialectics and a facile pen, he was able to over-shadow his disputants and uphold the doctrines of the conformist school.

Missionary Zeal of al-Ashᶜari :

For he considered it an obligation and a mission enjoined by God Almighty, al-Ashᶜari performed the task he had taken upon himself with an untiring zeal He used to attend the meetings of the Muᶜtazilites and search out rationalists to set at rest their doubts about the doctrines of the orthodox school If anyone raised the objection as to why he met the sceptics and dissenters, who ought to be shunned, he would reply that he could not do otherwise He explained that the Muᶜtazilites were all well-placed in life, held the offices of administrators, judges, and other venerable positions, and, therefore, they could not be expected to come to him If he too were to sit with folded hands, how would they come to know the Truth, and also that there was someone who could defend the faith with reason and arguments [2]

Achievements of al-Ashᶜari :

Al-Ashᶜari was a pastmaster of debates and polemics He had an aptitude and facility which he used with consumate skill in contending for the religion No one was better qualified than he for the task as in his knowledge of secular sciences like logic and dialectics he excelled all the Muᶜtazilite doctors and could rebut their objections like a teacher answering the questions of

1 *Tabᶜeen*, pp 39-40 and Ibn Khallikān, Vol II, pp 446-447
2 *Tabᶜeen*, p 116

his students One of his disciples, Abū ʿAbdullah ibn Khafīf has left an account of his first meeting with al-Ashʿarī in these words :

"I came from Shirāz to Basrā Being too keen to meet al-Ashʿarī, I enquired of his address I went to his place at a time when he was attending a debate A band of the Muʿtazilites was then blurting out questions one after another After they had all finished their haranguing, al-Ashʿarī began his speech He took the objections raised by each, one by one, and set at rest all of their doubts When al-Ashʿarī rose from the meeting, I followed him. He asked, 'What do you want ?' I replied, 'I want to see how many eyes, ears and tongues have you got ' He smiled on hearing my answer "[1]

The same narrator adds

"I could'nt see why you kept quiet in the beginning' said I, 'and allowed the Muʿtazilites to present their objections It behoved you to deliver lectures and meet their objections therein, instead of asking them to speak out first ' Al-Ashʿarī replied, 'I do not consider it lawful even to repeat their doctrines and beliefs, but once someone has expressed these, it becomes an obligation for the righteous to refute their tenets' "[2]

Abul Hasan ʿAlī al-Ashʿarī was the founder of Islamic scholasticism (*kalām*) All the dialecticians of the later ages have acknowledged al-Ashʿarī's God-gifted intelligence and sagacity, discernment and profundity Qadī Abu Bakr Baqillānī was known to his compatriots by the name of *Lisan-ul-Ummah* (Tongue of the Nation), on account of his eloquence and penmanship Once, when somebody remarked that his writings appear to excel those of al-Ashʿarī, Baqillānī replied that he considered it an honour to be able to understand al-Ashʿarī's works [3]

1 *Tabʿeen*, p 95
2 *Ibid* , pp 95-96
3 *Ibid* p 126

way unauthorised by God Almighty. Their interpretation is neither supported by reason nor by the Traditions handed down from the Prophet, his companions or their successors."[1]

Thereafter, throwing light on the canons of his own school of thought, he says :

"We have a faith in the Qur'ān and the Traditions and, therefore, hold the opinion that these have to be followed ungrudgingly. What has been handed down by the companions, their successors and traditionists has to be accepted completely and with unquestioning submission, for this is the way of Ahmad ibn Hanbal (may God bless him and give him a goodly reward by raising him to higher and sublime regions). We shun those who do not follow the path of Ahmad, for, he was the *Imām*, pious and erudite, whom God Almighty enabled to show the path of righteousness and efface the deviations and innovations, doubts of the sceptics and interpretations of the misguided. May God glorify the adorable and venerable *Imām*."[2]

The achievement of al-Ash'arī, however, did not consist merely of his defence of the orthodox school, for the Hanbalites and other traditionists had already been seized with the task The most valuable accomplishment of al-Ash'arī was the formulation of principles which enabled the tenets of the orthodox school to be accepted in the light of reason, i. e. on the basis of logical arguments. He examined the doctrines of the Mu'tazilites and other sects in accordance with the principles of logic and the philosophical terminology evolved by these sects, and brought out their mistakes so as to uphold the beliefs and tenets of the orthodox school.

Al-Ash'arī earned the displeasure of the Mu'tazilites and other misguided sects, natural and inevitable as it was ; but he was also criticised by those rigid Hanbalites and traditionists who

1 *Kitāb-ul-Ibānah*, p 5
2 *Kitāb-ul Ibānah*, p. 8

considered it a sin to discuss the issues raised by the rationalists or to use the philosophical terms for elucidating the tenets of the faith in the light of reason

Al-Ashʿari maintained that the ultimate source of faith and the key to metaphysical realities were revelation and the teachings of the Prophet rather than human reason, speculation or Grecian mythology. At the same time, he disagreed with the rigid dogmatism of the conformists who thought it prudent to keep quiet about the issues raised by the misguided sects simply because the Traditions handed down from the Prophet did not mention their terminology. Al-Ashʿari held the view that this attitude would be reckoned as a weakness of the orthodox school and would ultimately be harmful to it Al-Ashʿari also maintained that the attitude of the rigid dogmatists would enable the Muʿtazilites and other misguided sects, through their apparent endeavour to reconcile faith with reason and religion with philosophy, to attract the young and intelligent who were not content to be driven in a common groove. He agreed with the orthodox view that revelation and prophethood were the only sources to be depended upon in so far as the faith was concerned—a view diametrically opposed to the Muʿtazilites and the philosphers—but it was not only lawful but absolutely necessary or even obligatory to take recourse to the logical deduction and prevalent philosophical terminology for evincing the religious tenets. He maintained that it was not at all necessary to avoid the issues pertaining to perception or intellect, which were ultimately grounded in human experience but had unnecessarily been made a part of religious doctrines by the rationalists, in order to prove or disprove the latter with the help of a clever play upon words At the same time, he considered it essential for the expounders of religion to face those issues and refute the claims of the Muʿtazilites and other philosophers with the help of logic and reason. He did not subscribe to the view that the Prophet of Islam made no mention of the issues raised by the rationalists of later times, either on account of his ignorance or because the Prophet did not consider it lawful to do so It was so simply owing to

the fact that these questions and the rationalistic modes of thought had not come into existence during the life time of the Prophet. Al-Ashʿari maintained that like the new problems of sacred and secular laws which were brought to the fore by exigencies of changing times, new questions in the realm of faith and metaphysics were also being raised Therefore, like the jurispru-dents who had grappled with the legal problems and solved them through analogical deduction and amplification of canon-laws, the doctors of religion and the scholastics were duty-bound to explain and elucidate the canons of faith in regard to these new questions. Al-Ashʿari wrote a treatise entitled *Istehsān-ul-Khaudh fil-kalām* to explain his view-point in this regard.

Thus, ignoring the approbation or opposition of the either sect, al-Ashʿari went ahead with the task of defending religion according to his own light This undoubtedly required great courage and intelligence, and, as it were, al-Ashʿari proved himself equal to the task. With his lectures and writings he was able to stem the rising tide of the rationalism, *ʿitzāl* and philosophy, and save many souls from being swept away by the wave of scepticism He inculcated faith and enthusiasm, zeal and self-confidence among the followers of orthodox school through his well-argued and forceful vindication of the faith Al-Ashʿari's defence was, however, not the least apologetic On the contrary, he was able to eradicate the inferiority complex that had unconsciously seized the followers of the orthodox creed, and was insidiously undermining their self-confidence Al-Ashʿari soon turned the tables on the Muʿtazilites who, far from main-taining the force of their onslaught on the orthodox school, found it difficult to withstand the offensive of al-Ashʿari which was made with the full weight of an unshakable conviction Abū Bakr ibn as-Sairfi says that the Muʿtazilites had caused a crisis for Islam but God brought forth Abul Hasan ʿAli al-Ashʿari to take up the cudgels against them. He was able to overcome them with his intelligence and dialectics He, therefore, soon came to be regarded as one of the foremost expounders and renovators of the faith, while certain persons like Abū Bakr Ismaʿili hold him as

second only to Ahmad ibn Hanbal for his endeavours to uphold and defend the true Faith [1]

Al-Ashʿari's Works :

Al-Ashʿari defended the orthodox school not merely with his sermons, debates and polemics, but also wrote valuable treatises to expose the weaknesses of heretical sects Al-Zahabi reports that the commentary on the Qurʾān written by al-Ashʿari ran into thirty volumes Al-Ashʿari is said to have written some 250 to 300 works ; a large number of which traverses the main positions of the Muʿtazilites or other non-conformist sects and heretical creeds [2] One of the voluminous books written by al-Ashʿari is *Kitab-ul-Fusūl*, comprising twelve volumes, which confutes the doctrines of a number of sects including so-called rationalists, atheists and naturalists as well as other creeds like those of the Hindus, Jews, Christians and Magians [3] Ibn Khallikān has also mentioned some of his other works entitled *Kitab al-Lomʿa*, *Kitāb al-Mujaz*, *Idhaʾhul-Burhān*, *Al-Tabʿeen ʿAn Usūal id-Din*, and *Kitāb us-Sharah wat-Tafsil* Besides these works on dialectics, al-Ashʿari wrote several books like *Kitāb ul-Qiyās*, *Kitāb ul-Ijtihād* and *Khabar-ul-Wāhid* on other religious sciences He wrote a tract to refute the doctrine of the negation of Traditions reported through more than one source, which was expounded by Ibn ul-Rāwandi In one of his books entitled *al-ʿAmad* al-Ashʿari has given a list of 68 books written by him till 320 A H i e four years before his death A number of these works run into ten or twelve volumes The books written by him during his last four years are also by no means inconsiderable His *Maqalāt-ul-Islamiyīn* shows that al-Ashʿari was not merely a dialectician but also a reliable chronicler of different faiths In this book he has recorded the doctrines of a number of sects with a sense of responsibility

1 *Tabʿeen*, p 53
2 *Ibid* p 136
3 *Ibid* p 128

behoving an eminent historian, for, his explanation of their dogmas agrees with the exposition of these faiths by their own followers.[1]

Profound Knowledge and Piety :

Al-Ashᶜarı was not simply a prolıfic wrıter but one profound ın knowledge also Lıke all other mentors of the old he was unrivalled ın moral and spırıtual excellence too. A jurıst, Ahmad ibn ᶜAlı, says that he had been with al-Ashᶜarı for twenty years but he dıd not see anyone more reverent and godly, shy and modest ın hıs worldly affaırs but, at the same tıme, zestful where the performance of religious duties was concerned.[2] Abul Husain al-Harwı, a dıalectıcian, relates that for years together al-Ashᶜarı spent whole nights ın vıgils and performed mornıng prayers wıth the ablutıon taken at the nightfall.[3] The personal servant of al-Ashᶜari, Bındār ıbn al-Husaın, ıs on record that the only source of lıvelıhood of al-Ashᶜarı consısted of a fief wıth an ıncome of seventeen *dırhams* per day, whıch he had ınherited from his grandfather Bilāl ibn Abi Burdah ibn Abi Mūsā al-Ashᶜarı.[4]

Al-Ashᶜari died ın 324 A. H and was buried in Baghdad.[5] An announcement was made over hıs funeral that the "Defender of the Tradıtions" had passed away.

Abū Mansūr al-Maturīdī :

Durıng the same perıod another theologıan, Abū Mansūr al-Maturıdı (d. 332 A H) emeıged in Samarkand to defend the

1 Wensınk ın hıs book "Muslım Creed" (p 88) and Oreahner ın hıs ıntroductıon to *Maqalāt ul-Islamıyın*, have acknowledged thıs fact. (*Al-Ashᶜarı*, p 64)

2 *Tabᶜeen*, p 141.

3 *Ibıd* , p 141

4 *Ibıd* , p 142 and Ibn Khallıkān, Vol II, p 447

5 Ibn Khallıkān, Vol II, p 447

faith against the attacks of the heretical sects[1] Owing to the continuous wrangling with the Muʿtazilites, al-Ashʿari had become a bit extremist in some of his views which were stretched further by his followers. Al-Maturīdī's thought is, however, marked by its moderation He rejected all such accretions to the Ashʿarite thought which had become a part of it in due course of time, and which left many loopholes unfilled, many questions unanswered. Al-Maturidi perfected the Ashʿarite system and gave it an intellectually irreproachable form The differences between the Ashʿarites and the Maturidites were simply marginal and limited to 30 to 40 issues of comparatively lesser importance.[2]

Imām Abū Mansūr al-Maturidi, belonging to the Hanafite school of jurisprudence. had a majority of his followers amongst the theologians and dialecticians of that school just as most of the Shafeʿite dilecticians followed al-Ashʿari Al-Maturidi was also a man of letters who has left many valuable works refuting the doctrines of the Muʿtazilites, Shiaʿites and Qarmatians One of his books, *Tawilāt-i-Qurʾān* is an outstanding example of his keen intellect and mastery over rationalistic sciences of the day. However, since al-Ashʿari had to confront the Muʿtazilites in the centre of Islamic world, which also happened to be a seat of the Muʿtazilite school, he came to exert a far greater influence over the intellectual circles Also, al-Ashʿari was a great original mind who would always be remembered for laying the foundation of Islamic scholasticism

Later Ashʿarites :

A number of reputed savants of profound knowledge and

1 This was the period when as a reaction to the Muʿtazilites attack on orthodox creed, several savants were giving attention to evolution of an Islamic scholastism for the defence of Islam Tahāwi (d 331 A H) in Egypt and al-Maturidi (d 332 A H) in Samarkand took up the defence of religion but in due course of time both these schools of thought were absorbed in the Ashʿarite school

2 Sheikh Muhammad ʿAbdahū who has gone into the matter in greater detail says that the disputed issues were not more than thirty (*Ibn Tayymiyah* by Mohammad Abū Zuhra p 184).

unequalled agility of mind were produced by the Ashᶜarite school. They contributed to the development of the school and exerted an immense influence on the minds of the intellectuals and the educated youth with the result that the orthodox school was enabled again to gain supremacy in the Islamic world. In the fourth century of the Muslim era were born such luminaries as Cadi Abū Bakr Baqillānī (D 403 A H.) and Abū Is'haq Isfrai'nī (d 418 A H) and after them came Abū Is'haq Shirāzī (d 476 A.H) and Imām ul-Harmayn Abul Maᶜālī ᶜAbd al-Malik al-Juwaim (d. 478 A H) in the fifth century who were held in high esteem owing to their profound knowledge. Abū Is'haq Shirāzī was the Rector of the Nizāmiah University at Baghdad. He was sent by Caliph Muqtadi-b'Illāh as his ambassadar to the Court of the Saljukid king Malik Shah He was held in such a high esteem by the populace that in whichever town he happened to pass during his journey from Baghdad to Nishapur, the entire population came out to greet him, people showered over him whatever valuables they could afford and took the dust underneath his feet out of reverence When Shirāzi arrived at Nishapur, the entire population came out of the city to greet him and Imām ul-Harmayn carried the saddle-cloth of Shirāzi on his shoulder as a porter's burden while escorting him Imām ul-Harmayn took a pride ever thereafter on the honour of being able to serve Shirāzi [1]

Imām ul-Harmayn was accorded the highest place of respect by Nizām ul-Mulk, the Prime Minister of the Saljuqid King Alap Arslan. He held the charge of Preacher of the principal mosque of Nishapur, Director of the Religious trusts and Rector of the Nizāmiyah University at Nishapur. Ibn Khallikān writes of him :

> "For thirty years he remained without a peer in the fields of learning and piety He was the chief mentor and preacher, exempler and a man of God "[2]

An annalist has related an incident which shows the respect accorded to Imām ul-Harmayn. Once Malik Shah, the Saljukid

1 *Tabqat al-Shafᶜeih*, Vol III, pp. 91-92
2 Ibn Khallikān, Vol II, p 342

King announced the appearance of the new moon at the end of *Ramadhan* Imām ul-Harmayn, not satisfied with the evidence produced in this regard, got another announcement made which said .

> "Abul Maʿāli (name of Imām ul-Harmayn) is satisfied that the month of *Ramadhan* will continue till tomorrow. All those who want to act on his decision should keep fast tomorrow also "

When the king questioned Imām ul-Harmayn about his announcement he said .

> "I am bound to obey the King in matters falling in the sphere of the State but in questions pertaining to religion, the king ought to have asked for my decision, since under the *Shariʿah*, a religious decree carries as much authority as the edict of the king. And the matters pertaining to fast and *ʿId* are ecclesiastical issues with which the king has nothing to do."

The king had at last to get another declaration made saying that his earlier announcement was wrong and that the people should therefore follow the decision of Imām ul-Harmayn [1]

When Imām ul-Harmayn died in 478 A H , the markets of Nishapur were closed, the pulpit of the principal mosque was dismantled and four hundred of his disciples destroyed their pens and ink-pots as a mark of respect to him. The inhabitants of Nishapur received condolences and expressed their grief on the demise of Imām ul-Harmayn with one another for full one year [2]

Nizām ul-Mulk Tūsi, the Prime Minister of the then strongest Islamic kingdom of Saljukids was himself an Ashʿarite He gave great impetus to the Ashʿarite school by providing it with the official backing The two renowned educational institutions, the Nizāmiyah Universities of Nishapur and Baghdad proved to be a turning point in the Ashʿarite bid for victory over other intellectual movements in the then Islamic world.

1 Akhlaq-i-Jalāli, pp 115-119
2 Ibn Khallikān, Vol II, p 243

CHAPTER VI

DECLINE OF DIALECTICS

Philosophic and Esoteric Schools :

Although the Ashʿarites had gained ascendancy over other schools of thought by capturing the educational institutions, religious and intellectual circles, they began to lose their grip in due course of time. A man of al-Ashʿarī's dominating stature, of original and agile mind had overcome the Muʿtazilite school and re-established the supremacy of the *Sharīʿah* and the Traditions. His achievement can be attributed to his principles of scholasticism as much as to his own qualities of mind and heart, intelligence and learning. His school could continue to have its hold over the people by giving birth to similar illuminating personalities but unfortunately his followers, specially after the fifth century, developed a sense of complacency and were content simply with transmitting what they had learnt from their mentors They lost all originality which made them generally retrogressive. And those who were not content with treading the beaten path introduced philosophic concepts and terms into dialectics. They were enamoured by the philosophical method of reasoning although it neither provided any conclusive evidence to prove the issues they debated nor it employed an approach so natural and direct as the Qurʾān did. The method employed was, by its very nature, inconclusive and made their doctrines liable to be refuted.[1] Thus, the dialecticians who borrowed the philosophical terminology, concepts and approach did neither render any help to the orthodox school whom they claimed to represent, nor could they gain the respect of the rationalists and philosophers

1 For a detailed discussion on the subject *see* Ibn Taymiyah's *Ar-Radd al-Mantaqiyīn*

Popularity of Philosophy :

Owing to the patronage and keen interest of Caliph Mamūn a large number of Syriac, Greek, Latin and Persian works on Hellenistic philosophy had been translated into Arabic. A large number of these were treatises pertaining to the Aristotelian school which were, on the whole, proving harmful to the intelligent yet imprudent youth These translations also comprised works on logic, physics, chemistry, mathematics, etc. which could have been studied with profit but more interest was shown in metaphysical writings which were nothing else than a collection of Greek mythology cleverly presented as an intricate yet well-argued philosophy It was a spell of words, ideas and thoughts based on certain assumptions and conjectures, non-existant and unverifiable; it had the genealogy of Heavens and Agent Intellect and horoscopes showing the movement of the assumed First cause, Logos and Nous For a people endowed with the revealed truth and the knowledge of the nature and attributes of the Supreme Being, the Alpha and Omega of the Universe, and of creation and purpose of human existence, it was hardly necessary to waste its time on a mythology passed on as philosophy. Nevertheless, the philosophers who were great admirers of Greek logic, physics and mathematics accepted its mythology couched in philosophical terms as if it were a revealed truth. It is rather amusing to see how these people venerating Greek sciences as the fountain-head of classical wisdom also accepted their metaphysical persuits so avidly. Perhaps they thought themselves to be standing in need of Greek metaphysics and philosophy just as they needed the Grecian empirical sciences.

Arab Philosophers :

The Grecian Philosophy was destined to get in the world of Islam such foremost exponents as Yaqūb al-Kindi (d. 258 A. H.), Abū Nasr al-Farābi[1] (d. 339 A H.) and Abū ʿAli ibn Sina[2]

1. Known as Alpharabius in the Latin West
2. Called Avicenna in Europe.

(d. 428 A. H.), as were not to be found amongst the Greeks themselves In piety and moral excellence, knowledge and wisdom they assigned such an infallible place to Aristotle which cannot perhaps be claimed even for the Primal Cause. It was really a misfortune of the Islamic world that the major portion of its Hellenistic inheritance comprised the works of Aristotle who, being a free thinker, differed from rather than agreed with the prophetic teachings. It was another misfortune that amongst the Arab philosophers, none was conversant with the languages in which these philosophical works were originally written. They had, therefore, to depend on the translations and commentaries which were either incorrect or presented in a different colour by their translators and interpreters Aristotle had thus come to wield such an influence over the Arab philosophers that they made his system the basis of their philosophical speculations without any evaluation or criticism of his thought.

Brethren of Purity :

By the end of the fourth century A. H , the speculations of Greek and Hellenistic philosophers had generally been adopted by the rationalist schools amongst the Muslims It became a craze for every educated youngman who wanted to pose as an intellectual and a progressive elite. *Ikhwān us-Safa* or Brethren of Purity, a kind of sectret fraternity like Freemasons, had come into existence in the second half of the fourth century with its seat in Basrā. It was an eclectic, philosophical-cum-scientific school of thought which strove to reconcile religious and ethical doctrines with the standpoint of Greek philosophy. The charter of their aims and objects ran thus :

"The *Shan'ah* of Islam has been polluted by ignorance and perversion of the truth, and it can now be purified only through philosophy, for, the latter comprises religious tenets and knowledge, wisdom and analogical methods of reasoning Now, only a synthesis of Greek philosophy and the *Shan'ah* of the Prophet can achieve the desired objectives "[1]

1 Lutfi Jum'ah, p 253

The members of the Society had instructions not to waste their time and energy on aged persons for they had settled views, but to seek sympathisers amongst the youth who were prone to accept new ideas.[1]

The *Ikhwān* summed up the philosophical and scientific learning of the time in an encyclopaedic collection of 52 Epistles, (*Rasail Ikhwan us-Safa*) dealing with every branch of science, such as physics mathematics, metaphysics, philosophy, etc. The Mu'tazilites and other rationalists who were sympathetic to the ideas formulated in these treatises gave widest circulation to these Epistles which found their way into the system of Hispano-Arabic philosophy too within a hundred years.[2]

The Mut'azilites and Philosophers:

In their effort to rationalise the tenets of faith and to find out a confirmation of metaphysical doctrines such as the nature and attributes of God and the divine origin of the Qur'ān with the aid of human reason which was regarded by them as infallible, the Mu'tazilites had consciously or unconsciously done a great disservice to Islam. Nevertheless, they were religious persons who believed in revelation, were god-fearing, scrupulously followed the religious obligations, enjoined the lawful and prohibited the wrong.[4] This was so because they were serious about their religion and their rationalistic tendencies did not owe their origin to any external influence.[5] In view of these features of *Wāṣil*, it did not produce any movement inclined towards apostasy and atheism, denial of revelation and the Hereafter, or a tendency dangerously tinted with passivity and inertness, nor had the vigour and enthusiasm for faith amongst the Muslims been enfeebled by it.

1. Lutfi Jumʿah pp 253-61.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 254
3. *Ibid.*, p. 254
4. *Zuhr-Islām*, Vol III p 64.
5. They held that it was a duty of every Muslim to enjoin the lawful and prohibit the wrong. They also maintained that if someone were to be guilty of grievous sin, he would be eternally damned

Philosophy was, however, quite different from *'itizal*. In so far as philosophy claims to be an infallible source through which one can attain the knowledge of God in the fulness of His essence, it is a rival of revelation; it builds up a system of thought and approach which is opposed to the faith and tenets of a revealed religion Obviously, therefore, as the philosophy caught the imagination of the people, the respect for religion and the prophets dwindled in their estimation. Not simply the faith in revelation but the ethical norms and injunctions laid down by it for the practical conduct of life began to be viewed from an entirely different angle. Philosophy gave birth to a section among the Muslims who were openly antagonistic to religion and took pride in rejecting the Islamic dogma There were also philosophers who were not courageous enough to forsake Islam openly. They were content with paying a lip service to it but they had actually lost all faith in the religion.

Batinites :

Philosophy also gave birth to a new schism in Islam which was even more fatal to the spirit of religion and the teachings of the Prophet than the philosophy itself. These were Batinites or the adherents of a theological school of thought so named after *Bātin* (inner, esoteric), whose precursors and exponents were mostly drawn from the people who had lost their national kingdoms tc the irresistible arms of Islam. They could not hope to regain their lost power and prestige in any open contest against the might of the Muslim people. There were also self-indulgent people or those desirous of commanding a position of power and influence but who found the injunctions laid down by Islam for the practical conduct of life as obstacles in their way. All these persons gathered under the banner of the Batinites for they knew that they could neither gain a victory over Islam in the battlefield nor invite Muslims to renounce their faith. They were aware that any attempt to follow either of these two courses would fire a frenzy of enthusiasm amongst the Muslims for the defence of Islam They chose therefore an entirely new path to checkmate Islam

Esoteric and Exoteric interpretations of the Scripture:

The Scripture has clearly laid down the tenets of belief and code of conduct, if only because these are meant to be understood and acted upon by every human being:

And We never sent a messenger save with the language of his folk, that he might make (the message) clear for them.

(*Ibrāhīm* : 4)

The meaning of this verse is manifestly clear. The Prophet of Islam too had explained the import of Divine revelations and lived up to these precepts so that his followers might not remain in any doubt. The vocabulary of the Qur'ān and its meanings have thus been handed down, from the Prophet, without any break, and have ever afterwards been recognised and accepted by everyone as authentic and genuine, and to which no one raised any objection. The terms, prophethood (*nabuwwat*) and apostleship (*risālat*), angels (*malā'ika*), requital (*ma'ād*), Paradise (*Jannat*), Hell (*Dozakh*), the law (*shari'ah*), obligatory (*farzh*), necessary (*wājib*), lawful (*halal*), unlawful (*harām*), poor-due (*zakāt*), prayer (*salāt*), fast (*rozah*), pilgrimage (*hajj*) and similar other words convey a concise and definite purport of the doctrines, rites, ceremonies and teachings of Islam. In truth and reality, these teachings and articles of faith have been handed down without any divergence whatsoever and so has been the vocabulary and terminology evolved to signify the former. The two have become so interdependent that one cannot suffer any mutation without a variation in the other.

Whenever the words 'prophet', 'apostle', 'messenger', 'prayer', or 'poor-due' are used, these denote the same exposition as taught by the Prophet and understood by his companions and successors; all of whom acted upon these in a particular manner and transmitted the import of these words which have been handed down by one generation to another. The Bātinites knew that the interdependence of Qur'ānic vocabulary and its meanings form the key to the exposition of the doctrines of Muslim Faith; these constitute the moorings of intellectual and practical life of the Ummah, connecting the later generations with the fountainhead of

Divine guidance which lay in the past If they could only drive a wedge between the past and the present, asunder the connecting link by rendering the import of Qur'ānic vocabulary ambiguous and oracular, undefined and obscure, then the *Ummah* could be made to give credence to any innovation or deviation, agnosticism or infidelity

These elements, therefore, began a vigorous campaign to popularise a new type of Qur'ānic exegesis and the *Sunnah's* interpretation which invested the vocabulary used therein with a hidden or mystic sense apart from their open or manifest meanings. It was claimed that the allegoric or enigmatic sense, beyond the range of ordinary understanding and accessible only to the initiate, guided unto a purer knowledge than did the meanings of the Qur'ānic terms understood commonly by the scholars The masses clinging to the literal sense could never attain the hidden but true content of the revelation They maintained that the detailed ritual enjoined by the *Shari'ah* was a cold formality meant for safeguarding the spiritual existence of the laity In other words, the Qur'ānic terminology, like a veil, hid the deep and occult meaning,[1] but when an initiate attains the purer and sublimer knowledge he is set free from the legal obligations of the *Shari'ah*[2] They based their claim on this verse of the Qur'ān .

> . *and he will relieve them of their burden and the fetters that they used to wear*
>
> (*Al-Ā'rāf . 157*)

After accepting the doctrine of obvious and hidden meanings in principle, it presented no difficulty to explain away the meaning of the terms like 'prophet', 'revelation', 'angels', or

1 *Talbīs-e Iblīs*, p 102

2 The Batinites also believed in the suspension of the obligations enjoined by the *Shari'ah* Sayidna Idrīs, a Batinite exponent says "Allah conferred prophethood on Isma'il who abrogated the *Shari'ah* of the Prophet Muhammad" Similar views held by Muiz ud-din-illah Fatimi, have also been reported

'Hereafter' in whatever manner one desired. Here is an example of it :

> "Prophet is a person illuminated by the Holy Spirit of the Divine Being. Gabriel is not an angel but an allegorical name for Divine grace Requital signifies coming back of a thing towards its origin. Pollution consists of giving out a secret; bathing, renewal of a pledge; fornication, transmission of the secret and occult knowledge to one not initiated; purity, disavowal of all tenets save the Batinite cult; ablution, acquirement of knowledge from an illuminated teacher; prayer, a call to obey the leader; poor-due, gradual initiation of the faithful to the hidden knowledge; fast, taking precaution to guard the secret; and *hajj*, seeking the knowledge of true wisdom which is an end unto itself. The knowledge of the occult is Heaven; literal sense, the Hell; and K'abah, the person of the apostle. 'Ali is the gate of K'abah while the Noah's flood described in the Qur'ān means a deluge of knowledge in which the unilluminated were drowned. The bonfire of Namrood alludes to his wrath and not fire; Abraham was asked not to offer his son for sacrifice but to obtain a pledge from him; the literalists are Gog and Magog; and the staff of Moses really means the argument and proof furnished by him."[1]

The Traitors of Islam :

The Batinite view in regard to the latent and deeper application of God's word or the Prophet's teachings and repudiation of the manifest sense has always been successfully adopted by the traitors and hypocrites. The so-called deeper sense, inter-woven with mystical and philosophical ideas borrowed from a variety of sources, can be made equally adaptable to the requirement of a learned elite as well as the uncritical mind in order to undermine

1. Abbreviated from Qawā'id-o-'Aqā'id (written by Muhammad ibn Hasan ad-Dailami Yamani in 707 A. H.), pp 16-18.

the intellectual, moral, social and religious structure of the Muslim society. It can be employed to secure a split within the body-politic of Islam as, indeed, all the later rebels against the prophethood of Muhammad have taken advantage of this heretical view. All those impostors who have subsequently elevated themselves to the position of a fake prophethood, have first rendered ambiguous the terminology employed by the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* The two cases in point are Bahāism of Iran and Qadiānism[1] of India.

The so-called hidden or mystic interpretation of Qur'ānic vocabulary, an example of which has been given above, could have been hardly acceptable to a person not devoid of common-

1. The Qadiānis too, like the Batinites, have denied the commonly understood meanings of such terms as the 'seal of prophethood,' 'Masīh and his second coming, 'miracles', Dajjāl, etc The Qur'ānic vocabulary has been retained but the import of these terms has been drastically changed as could be seen from the writings of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and the commentary of the Qur'ān by Muhammad 'Ali.

Bahāites on the other hand, have even produced a new *Shari'ah* on the basis of their esoteric interpretation Their *Shari'ah* enjoins fast for one month in a year, but the month is of only 19 days Instead of beginning the fast from early morning, they begin it from Sunrise. The faithful is required to follow the dictates of the *Shari'ah* from the age of 11 to 42, and thereafter he is freed from its obligations Ablution is not obligatory but simply recommendatory *Purdah* is not necessary It is obligatory to visit the house in which Bāb, founder of the sect, was born. Congregational prayer is to be offered only for a funeral Nothing remains polluted after one accepts the faith of Bahāites and everything attains purity the moment a faithful touches it. Water is never polluted The law of inheritance differs from that of Islam (Shakīb Arslan, *Vol IV*, p 355, reproduced from the French Encyclopædia of Islām).

M Huart has rightly written in his article on Bahāism in the Encyclopædia of Islam that in the garb of Islamic reformation, Bāb founded an entirely new religion whose fundamentals and beliefs are quite different from that of Islam and these have in fact been also presented as such in order to reconstruct a new social order. The same is the case with Qadianis Each has a prophet and a new religious order, like their predecessor, the Batinites

sense; but, the dialectical quibblings had already produced an atmosphere of intellectual anarchy in the world of Islam, wherein people unnecessarily longed for hairsplitting and philosophical sophistry The Batinites were, therefore, successful in misleading those sections of the people who, under the influence of Greek philosophy and mythology, were freely applying the terminology like 'Nous' and 'Logos', 'Universal Spirit' and the 'First Cause' to Islamic doctrines, rites, etc They also gathered round them some who were dissatisfied with the extremism of the orthodox school, while others, in the hope of helping the *Ahl-i-Bait* (the house of the Prophet) or opposing the ruling dynasty lent them a helping hand With the help of an elaborate occult ritual for initiation of their adherents the Batinies had created a secret yet highly efficient instrument of power which was a cause of concern for the then powerful Islamic kingdoms Some of the most reputed and ablest personages like Nizām ul-Mulk Tūsi and Fakhr ul-Mulk fell to the terrorism and murderous assaults of the Batinites[1]

Destruction of the religious or political opponents of the Batinites by terrorism and murder had become such a common feature that nobody—not even the kings or highest officials—could be sure that he would remain alive till the next day Ibn al-Jawzi reports that if anyone did not return to his house in Isfahan before the nightfall, it was presumed that he would have been killed by the Batinites Apart from the lawlessness, the Batinites had also helped, as explained earlier, the growth of occult and heretical interpretation of the Qur'ānic text and perversion of the accepted tenets of the faith

In an atmosphere surcharged with the anti-Islamic influences of Batinites and philosophical ideas borrowed from varied sources, a richly endowed thinker was required to save the situation He had to be a man of outstanding knowledge and intellectual gifts, well-versed in philosophy as well as religious lore, and capable of

1 For a detailed list of personages killed at the hands of Batinites *see Nizām ul-Mulk Tūsi* pp 560-563

drawing upon the findings of his predecessors with a greater clarity and perspicacity In order to bring about a synthesis between philosophical objectivity and the religious faith, he had also to be a man of unequalled piety and moral excellence endowed with an unflinching faith, and backed by a mystical illumination in regard to the Supreme Reality, one who possessed a burning zeal for renovation of the faith and who could give a call to uphold the tenets of the *Shariᶜah* and the *Sunnah* Such a man appeared on the scene in the middle of the fifth century A H., and he was Abū Hamid al-Ghazali.

This was the most coveted academic position of the time althoughr al-Gazali was then not more than 34 years of age. His renown as a savant, teacher and an eloquent speaker spread so rapidly that his lectures began to be over-crowded by an ever larger number of students and scholars. Sometimes in addition to as many as 300 students, hundreds of nobles and chiefs attended his lectures. Al-Ghazalı soon came to occupy, on account of his scholarship, intelligence and forceful personality, such a position of eminence in Baghdad that he was regarded a compeer of the grandees and chiefs of the State. In prestige and solemnity, according to a chronicler of his time, al-Ghazali surpassed the nobility of Baghdad including even the Caliphate.[1] In 485 A.H. the ʿAbbāsid Caliph Mūqtadi b'Illāh, appointed him as his ambassador in the court of Turkhān Khatoon, who then headed the Saljukid empire. Another ʿAbbāsid Calıph, Mustazhir b'Illāh, held al-Ghazali in high esteem and it was on his behest that he wrote a treatise to refute the cult of Batinites. He named the Book *al-Mustazhiri* after the Calıph's name.

Al-Ghazali's Intellectual Crisis :

Durıng this period of prosperity, worldly fame and brilliant achievement for which a scholar can aspire, it was only natural that al-Ghazalı should have led a life of contentment, as most of the scholars usually do. But for a man of lofty ideals, creative genius and intellectual grit, as al-Ghazali was, it was unthinkable that he should rest satisfied merely with position and prestige. There can be no denying the fact that this very internal conflict and disquietude, the Promethean quest, made him a renovator of the faith. However, history can offer but a few such striking example where one had abandoned a brilliant career, fame and position for the satisfaction of his soul. Al-Ghazali has himself described the deep inner struggle which forced him to give up all the worldly possessions including his teaching vocation, and to

1. *Tabqāt al-Shafeʿiyah*, Vol. IV, p 107.

search after Truth. These were Dialecticians, who claimed to possess insight and wisdom, Batinites, who insisted on a hidden, true and deeper knowledge vouchsafed to them through impeccable *Imāms*; Philosophers, who arrogated themselves as masters of logic and reason; and, Mystics, who laid a claim to be illuminated and favoured with beatific vision I proceeded to explore the ideas, thoughts and writings of each of these groups but was not satisfied with anyone of them I studied the writings of the reputed dialecticians and authorities on this science, and myself penned a few treatises I reached the conclusion that although this branch of learning fulfilled its object, it was not sufficient for my purpose as it argued on the premises put forth by its opponents. The dialecticians have to rely upon a number of premises and propositions, which they accept in common with the philosophers, or, they are obliged to accept the authority of the Qur'ān or the *Sunnah*, or the consensus But these could not be of much avail to one who has no faith in anything except in the necessary principles of reason, as was the case with me.

"In regard to philosophy, I thought it necessary to make a detailed and critical study of the science before forming my own opinion of it. I had little time to spare from my pre-occupations of teaching and writing since, I had as many as 300 students who attended my lectures. However, I somehow managed to find time for it and after having finished the entire literature on the subject within two years, I devoted one year to reflection on the premises of philosophy. I reached the conclusion that the secular sciences can be divided into six branches. Mathematics, Logic, Physics, Politics, Ethics and Metaphysics. Of these, the first five do not either deny or affirm religion, nor, is it necessary to reject them for the affirmation of religion. The precepts of Physics sometimes do come into conflict with the religious doctrines but these are only few. In this regard one ought to believe that the natural

phenomenon is not self-propelled but dependent on God Almighty. It is true that all those who come across the agility and incisiveness of the intellect of philosophers in these sciences, are generally overawed by them and are led to the conclusion that this would be true of them in every branch of learning. It is, however, not necessary that anyone skilled in one branch should be an adept in another science as well Anyway, when people see the philosophers denying faith and conviction, they too walk into their shoes On the other hand, some brainless exponents of Islam consider it their bounden duty to refute whatever the philosophers say and sometimes even go to the extent of denying their researches in the field of Physics as well A harmful effect of it is that all those who accept the veracity of intellect's search of truth and uphold the necessary principles of reason, begin to have doubts in Islam itself and become sceptics. The only branch of knowledge which comes into conflict with religion is Metaphysics, and it is in this science that the philosophers have generally been misled. As a matter of fact, the philosophers have themselves not been able to follow satisfactorily, in this branch of science, the laws of rigorous argumentation they had evolved for logical reasoning, and that is why there are wide differences amongst them in regard to it I have, therefore, arrived at the conclusion that philosophy would not be able to satisfy me, for, the intellect cannot by itself cover the entire field of objects and events nor unravel all the mystries.

"As for the Batinites, I have had an opportunity to make a detailed study of their cult for writing *al-Mustazhiri* I had found that the veracity of their tenets and doctrines ultimately depends on the teachings of an impeccable and illuminated teacher, the *Imām*; but the existence of such a teacher stands to be verified, and, in truth and reality, both, are, extremely dubious. Now, only Mysticism

remained to be examined and, therefore, I turned my attention to it. Mysticism, too, is of two kinds, intellectual and intuitional. It was easy for me to look into the first and I went through *Qoot ul-Qulūb* of Abū Talıb Makki and the tracts of Harith al-Muhāsībi, Junaid, Shibli, Bā Yazid al-Bustāmı and other mystics I gathered whatever knowledge of mysticism could be had from the books but, I found that the knowledge of the essence of reality could be obtained not through study of mysticism but through intuition, transport and ecstasy brought about by purification of the heart. I had already attained an unflinching faith, through the speculative branches of knowledge and religious and secular sciences I had mastered, on the existence of Supreme Reality, Prophethood and Resurrection. This conviction was, however, not attained through an experience or argument which could be analysed. It had been firmly implanted in my heart that the eternal bliss could be had only through inculcating the awe of God, renunciation of the material world, whole-hearted attention to the eternal life in the Hereafter and an earnest devotion to God All this was, however, not possible so long as one did not sever the attachments of position and riches, fame and worldly life

"I pondered over my own condition. I realised that I was wholly immersed in worldly temptations, its ties and attachments. The vocation of teaching appeared to be a noble pursuit but, as further reflection revealed, I was paying my entire attention to those sciences which were neither important nor beneficial for the Hereafter. I probed into the motives of my work as a teacher, and found that, instead of any sincere desire to propitiate God, I was after honour and fame. I was convinced that I was on the edge of an abyss, and if I did not take immediate steps to retrieve the situation, I should be doomed to eternal fire. Still undecided, one day, I resolved to abandon everything and leave Baghdad; the next day I

gave up my resolution Six months passed away in this state of uncertainty On the one hand the pull of temptations asked me to remain where I was, on the other, the Faith gave a call to get up It cried to me, 'Up! up! Thy life is short and thou hast a long journey to make All thy *pretended knowledge is nought* but *falsehood and fantasy*' Often my carnal thoughts whispered to me, 'This is a temporary yearning God has favoured thee with respect and honour If thou giveth it up and then tries to retrace thy steps and come back, thou wilt not be able to get it back again' Thus, I remained, torn asunder by earthly passions and religious aspirations, for about six months, until it became impossible to postpone my decision any longer. Then, God Himself caused an impediment He chained my tongue and prevented me from lecturing Vainly I desired to teach my pupils who came to me, but my mouth became dumb The silence to which I was condemned cast me into a violent despair. I lost all appetite, I could neither swallow a morsel of bread, nor drink a drop of water Gradually I became too weak and at last the physicians under whose treatment I was, gave up all hope of my recovery They said that my heart was so severely afflicted that no treatment would be of any avail till this affliction was removed Finally, conscious of my weakness and of the prostration of my soul, I took refuge in God like a man who has exhausted himself and is denied all means I prayed to Him *Who answereth the wronged one when he crieth unto Him*,[1] and He made easy for me to sacrifice honour, wealth and family

"I intended to go to Syria but told the people that I would go to Mecca When the people around me came to know of my decision, they deprecated it deeply for they could not even think of any laudable reason behind my resolve In their opinion, I enjoyed a coveted place which

1 *An-Namal*, 62

enabled me to preach and disseminate knowledge. The people also began to spread numerous rumours about me. Those who were far away thought that I was giving up my profession at the instance of the administration. On the other hand, those who knew how much government was keen on retaining my services considered it a misfortune that I was leaving the premier academy of Islamic learning. Finally, I left Baghdad, having given away all my fortune and preserving only as much as was necessary for my support and that of my children. I went to Syria from Baghdad and remained there for two years. During this period, I engaged myself in meditation and penance. I practised whatever I had learnt of the ways of mystics and endeavoured to purify my soul, rectify my morals and occupied myself with the recollection of God. For a time I retired to the principal mosque of Damascus Often, I went into one of the minarets of the mosque and remained there in seclusion for days together. From Damascus, I went to Jerusalem. There too I used to retire into the *Sakharah* After having visited the tomb of Abraham, I felt a desire to go for the *Hajj* and visit the Mosque of the Prophet I, therefore, embarked upon my journey to Hejaz After the *Hajj* was over, I went to my home town although I had earlier no longing to visit my family I took care to spend my time in secluded meditation, purification of the heart and recollection of God at my house but the events and happenings, care of dependants and their needs constantly intervened in securing a perfect state of peace and bliss I was, however, not denied of it entirely and, from time to time, was favoured with the illumination and ecstatic transports. I spent ten years in this manner. What revelations were made to me during this period of meditation could not be described but, I must say for the benefit of my readers that I came to know that the mystics were most truly godly, their life most beautiful, their rules of conduct most perfect, and their morality

sake of undergoing a physical exercise; some to emulate others, and there were others who considered religious practices necessary for gaining certain material benefits. These persons saw no harm in giving up these practices if they could find a way to save themselves from the harm which non-performance of religious observances would have entailed I realised that I could easily remove their doubts As a matter of fact, I found myself fully capable of exposing the hollowness and implausibility of their philosophic convictions because of the deep knowledge of speculative sciences. I, therefore, felt an ardent desire to take up this work since it appeared to be the crying need of the time I said to myself: 'How far dost it befit thee to sit in seclusion? It is an epidemic that is spreading like wild fire and the learned have themselves fell a victim to the same disease The bondsmen of God have reached the brink of destruction'. But, then, I also thought whether it would be possible for me to accomplish such a huge task. I said to myself. 'The guidance of the Prophet was available in the days of yore, but now if thou invitest men to Truth and the way of God, the world wilt turn thy enemy. How wilt thou, single-handed, struggle against them all, and endure the hardships? This could have been possible under the reign of a pious king determined to assist and promote religion'. Thus I expressed my helplessness before God and decided to spend the rest of my life in seclusion. But, it seems, God had willed otherwise. The king implored me to proceed to Nishapur and fight the growing heretical tendencies The king had appealed to me so earnestly that my rejection of his order would have certainly made him angry Then I said to myself: 'One of the reasons for thy resolve having fallen apart, it cannot be right now to remain in seclusion for this would simply mean avoiding discomforts and hardships'. Has not God said:

Do men imagine that they will be left (at ease) because they

say. We believe, and will not be tested with affliction? Lo! We tested those who were before you. Thus Allah knoweth those who are sincere, and knoweth those who feign.[1]

And God has addressed his Prophet thus although he was the most exalted amongst His bondsmen

Messengers indeed have been denied before thee and they were patient under the denial and the persecution till Our succour reached them There is none to alter the decisions of Allah Already there hath reached thee (somewhat) of the tidings of the messengers (We sent before) [2]

"I also sought the advice of a few friends who were illuminated and have had beatific visions They advised me to give up seclusion Few of them related the dreams some pious persons had seen which indicated that the step I proposed to take would have far-reaching effects for the revival of Faith They hinted that in the fifth century which was to begin after a month something remarkable was to happen which would renovate the Faith It has been foretold in the Traditions that in the beginning of every century God brings forth a man who restores and reanimates the faith of the people. All these tidings gave hope to me God made it easy for me to set off for Nishapur and I finally made up my mind to renounce the seclusion in 499 A H I had left Baghdad in 488 A H and thus I remained in seclusion for eleven years God had ordained it to happen thus, however. I could not have dreamt of giving up honour and fame before I left Baghdad but God had made that easy for me Similarly, I could never have thought of renouncing my retirement and going back to teach again, but it too was made easy by God" [3]

Al-Ghazali set off for Nishapur in 499 to resume his teaching vocation in the Nizamiyah University There was, however, a

1 *Al-ʿAnkabūt*, 2-3

2 *Al-Anʿām*, 34

3 Abbreviated from *al-Munqidh*, pp 114-116

world of difference between his taking up the teaching profession earlier and for the second time. Earlier he taught to secure honour, wealth and position, but now he considered himself commissioned to exhort people to purify their morals and soul. He explains the difference thus·

"I know that I have come back to my vocation of teaching but it would not be correct to call it a resumption of my earlier occupation. There is a world of difference between the two Earlier, I used to teach the sciences which were calculated to bring honour, wealth and position, and by my words and actions, I led my students to that direction, but now, I want to teach them the knowledge that helps to renounce wealth and position. God is fully aware that this is my intention, and my only desire is that my present efforts should lead to the purification of my soul and the souls of other people I do not know whether I would reach my destination or would pass away before the completion of my task. However, I believe, and have an unflinching conviction, on account of the knowledge of certitude which has been revealed unto me, that the real power rests in God alone. It is only He who can save one from evil and profanity and lead unto the path of sanctity and grace I did not come here of my own accord, it was God who moved me on to this place, I did not begin my work, but God made me to begin it I beseech God that he may first cleanse and elevate my soul before he causes me to reform and purify the souls of others May He reveal unto me righteousness which I may follow; and disclose the evil which I may forsake."[1]

Achievements of al-Ghazali:

Endeavours of al-Ghazali for the revivification of Islam were two-fold, as follows.

(1) He stemmed the tide of philosophy and of the Batanite

1. Abbreviated from *al-Munqidh*, p. 116

evil and began a counter-attack on these movements on behalf of Islam.

(2) He made a critical evaluation of the religious and moral state of the then Islamic society and proposed measures to reform it.

Encounter with Philosophy:

The efforts made till the time of al-Ghazali to counteract the atheistic influence of Greek philosophy consisted merely of an apologetic vindication of Islamic tenets. Philosophers were then taking the offensive and the scholastics of Islam, the dialecticians, were content with parrying the attack. Philosophy was undermining the very foundations of Islam while Dialectics tried to shield it but none amongst the dialecticians and doctors of religion had the courage to strike at the roots of philosophy. In fact no savant of Islam had tried to make any critical evaluation of the philosophic premises and to beleaguer the aggressor in its own citadel. The tone of the dialecticians, save only that of Abul Hasan al-Ash'ari who did not have, however, to face the philosophers, was apologetic, or, at best, defensive. Al-Ghazali was the first man, who, along with a profound knowledge of religious sciences, made a detailed and deep study of philosophy as well He then wrote *Maqsid al-Falsafah* (The aim of the Philosophers) in which he summed up the salient issues of Logic, Metaphysics and Physics In this book he condensed the philosophical premises dispassionately in an explicit manner. He made it clear in the introduction to this book that Mathematics is a science which does not admit of any difference of opinion but it has nothing to do with the religion; either in the affirmation or negation of the latter. Religion, however, comes into conflict with Metaphysics. The logical syllogisms are sometimes wrong while there may also be differences of opinion in regard to the terminology employed in this branch of knowledge. Physics is sometimes mixed up with facts, uncertain or dubious, for Metaphysics is also included in its scope. Logic merely subserves these sciences by lending its terminology to them.

Al-Ghazali then wrote another book entitled *Tahāfut al-Falāsafah* (Incoherence of the Philosophers) In this book he criticises, from an Islamic point of view, Physics and Metaphysics of the philosophical school and brings out their weaknesses and contradictions in a lucid and forceful language. We find al-Ghazali expressing himself self-confidently, in an elegant and incisive style. At places he employs a satirical diction which was not only effective but perhaps necessary to bring back the self-confidence of those who had been overawed by Philosophy. We find the author self-reliant and indomitable, attempting to demolish the reputation of the teachers of philosophy, he speaks of the Greek philosophers and guides as his equals and points out their mistakes in a manner none had dared before him In order to save the situation for Islam it was imperative that someone should be able to strike at the foundations of philosophy instead of merely defending the faith. Al-Ghazali rose to the occasion and this book bespeaks of his endeavour from cover to cover In the introduction to *Tahāfut al-Falāsafah* he writes

> "Now-a-days we see people who appear to arrogate themselves as intellectually superior to the populace. These people look disdainfully on religious practices for they have learned the awe-inspiring names of some of the Greek Philosophers like Aristotle, Socrates and Plato. They have learnt from the eulogistic writings of their admirers that the Greek doctors of the old had made far-reaching discoveries in the fields of Mathematics, Logic, Physics and Metaphysics, and that these teachers were peerless in qualities of heart and heart, but that they had rejected the faith and its doctrines. The Greek masters regarded religion as a man-made dogma without any content of truth. Now, following in the footsteps of their mentors these elements have too rejected religion so that they may be taken as an intelligent, liberal and smart set of fellows. Simply to feign themselves as elite and intellectuals, these persons denigrate religion, and it is why I thought of bringing to light the mistakes committed by the Greek philosophers in

their writings on Metaphysics I also intend to demonstrate how the premises and principles, notion and observations of these philosophers are not a whit more than child's play or, indeed, a laughing-stock "[1]

After giving a detailed description of the genealogy and horoscope of the Greek philosophic-cum-metaphysical concepts like Logos, Nous, the First Cause or the intermediate agents between the Primal Cause and His creation, al-Ghazali becomes more trenchant and lively in his criticism of the philosophers He writes .

"Your doctrines and details thereof are simply assumptions and conjectures, or, to be truthful, obscure reflections overcast with darkness. Nobody would doubt the insanity of a man who even dreams of such nonsensical things "[2]

Again, he says ·

"I really wonder how even a brainless fellow can swallow such inconsistencies, much less those philosophers who are ever inclined to hairsplitting in logical disputations."[3]

He expands this idea at another place where he writes

"In venerating the Agent Intellect, these persons have completely overlooked to accord the reverence and awe due to God Almighty. They have made Him an ineffective diety, a simple essence, dealing with the universals and having no knowledge of the particulars He bears a distinction from a lifeless entity only in so far as He possesses His own consciousness (and who knows that the lifeless objects are devoid of all consciousness). Verily, God misguides those who forsake the path of Divine guidance and deny His revelation.

I made them not to witness the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor their own creation[4]

1. *Tahāfut al-Falāsafah*, pp. 2-3
2. *Ibid* , pp 29-30
3. *Ibid* , p 33
4. *Al-Kahf*, p 51

"Those who have misgivings about the omnipotence of God Almighty think that divine things can be subjected to their thought and imagination Being presumptuous of their intellect they hold that it is not necessary to follow the prophets of God. That these persons should propagate, under the cover of philosophy, such ludicrous presumptions which others would be ashamed to dream of, is indeed natural and reasonable "[1]

Effect of the Incoherence of Philosophers :

The courageous criticism and, to an extent, the denigration of Philosophy by al-Ghazali began a new chapter in the history of Islamic scholasticism which was later brought to a successful completion by Ibn Taymiyah

Tahafut al-Falasafah caused an stir in the ranks of philosophers who had to suffer an irreparable loss on account of it. However, after al-Ghazali there arose no philosopher worthy of note for one hundred years. At last, Ibn Rushd,[2] a great admirer of Aristotle and a spirited defender of philosophy wrote *Tahafut al-Tahafut* (Incoherence of Incoherence) by way of rejoinder to *Tahafut al-Falasafah* by the close of the sixth century. Many scholars are of the view that if Ibn Rushd had not put up the defence on behalf of philosophy, it would have been crippled by the hostile criticism of al-Ghazali. Philosophy was granted a fresh lease of life through the efforts of Ibn Rushd for another one hundred years [3]

Attack on Batinites :

Besides philosophy, the crisis caused by the Batinites movement had received attention of al-Ghazah during his first stay in Baghdad when he wrote *al-Mustaz'hiri* at the instance of the then Caliph Al-Ghazali has made a mention of this book in his

1 *Tahafut al-Falasafah*, p 31
2 Known as Averroes in the West
3 Lutfi Jum'ah, p 72

autobiographical account of the search for truth entitled *al-Munqidh min ad-Dhalāl.* Al-Ghaẓalı perhaps wrote three other treatises entitled *Hujjat ul-Haq*, *Mufsalul-Khilāf* and *Qāsım ul-Bātiniyah* [1] Two more books on the subject *Fadhayah al-Ibāhiyah* and *Mawahām ul-Bātınıyah* have been mentioned in the list of al-Ghazalı's writings No one else could have encountered Batinites so successfully as al-Ghazalı dıd, for, he was fully aware of the ways of mystics besıdes being a savant of both the secular and religious scıences. Taking shelter behind the terminology drawn from philosophy, theii cult of "esoteric meanings" was a combination of sophism and conspiracy For a man like al-Ghazalı it was comparatıvely easy to smash thıs snare of Batınites His effective answer to the challenge of Batınites made ıt a discredited sect ever after him

Al-Ghazali's evaluation of Social Conditions :

The second remarkable achievement of al-Ghazalı was his evaluation of the religıous and moral state of the society from an Islamic vıewpoint which awakened the spırit for re-Islamisation ın the communıty *Ihyā' ʿUlūm ıd-Dın* (The Revival of Religous Scıences) was the result of his endeavours in thıs regard

Ihyā' ʿUlūm id-Dīn :

Ihyā' ʿUlūm ıd-Dın occupies a distınguished place among the few lıterary works which have had a lastıng effect ın mouldıng the moral and spiritual life of the Islamic world Hafiz Zaın ud-dın al-Iraqı (author of *Alfiyah*), who brought out a collectıon of the Traditions quoted ın the *Iyhā'*, is of opinıon that ıt ıs the foremost lıterary compositıon of Islamic peoples [2] ʿAbdul Ghāfir Farsi, a contemporary of Al-Ghazalı and a disciple of Imām ul-Harmayn, says that no book like ıt had been written before.[3]

1 Al-Ghazalı has mentioned the names of these books ın hıs another book *Jawāhır ul-Qurʾān*, p 26

2 *Taʿrīf al-Ihyā'*. Vol I, p 14.

3 *Ibıd* , p 15

Another reputed scholar, Sheikh Muhammad Gāzrūni, remarked that if all the sciences were effaced completely, he could revive them with the help of the *Ihyā'*.[1] Hafiz Ibn al-Jawzi differed from al-Ghazali on many issues, but he has acknowledged the popularity and matchless sincerety of the *Ihyā'* and has written a summary of it under the caption *Minhāj ul-Qāsidin* The *Ihyā'* was written at a time when al-Ghazali had returned home after more than ten years of seclusion and meditation in search of the truth. He now wanted to disseminate his message of reform and rectitude. In reflecting the tremendous sincerity and heroic sacrifice, heart-felt certitude and ardent zeal of the author to revivify the true faith the *Ihyā'* presents an striking example. Shibli Na'omani writes in *Al-Ghazali*.

> "In Baghdad he felt an irresistible urge to embark upon the quest for truth. He proceeded to study each religion but still remained dissatisfied. At last he turned to mysticism but it was something to be experienced in the recesses of one's heart rather than to be studied, and the first step towards it was purification of the heart and transformation of the self. The pre-occupations of al-Ghazali, however, left no room for it. What honour and fame, sermons and debates, had to do with the purification of heart and soul? Obviously, it was a path that lead to wilderness.
>
> "At last, donning a mendicant's habit he left Baghdad and took to wandering. After a long period spent alternately in complete seclusion and meditation, he had an access to divine manifestation. He would have spent the rest of his life lost in beatific visions, but witnessing the contamination of religion and morals all around him—a malady from which the laity and the elite, the savant and the illiterate were suffering alike—he began to give expression to his experiences and convictions. He could not bear with equanimity the degeneration of the mentors

1. *Ta'rif ul-Ihyā'*, Vol I, p 15.

of faith into a cess-pool of crass materialism. He wrote the book in these circumstances. As he himself writes in its preface :

"I found every one hankering after the material gains. People had become forgetful of the eternal salvation, while the doctors of religion, who were guides to the right path, were not to be found any longer There remained only those who had lost their soul to worldly temptations. These people had led every one to suppose that knowledge consists simply in the debates and arguments by which they spread their fame, or else ornate sermons, by which they held the people spell-bound, or else legal opinion, by which they sat in judgement to settle the disputes of others. The knowledge that was required to illuminate the path leading to the world-to-come had thus completely disappeared. I could not endure this state of affairs and had ultimately to sound the alarm."[1]

Al-Ghazali's critique of the Society :

Al-Ghazali's object was to bring about a moral and spiritual transformation of the people of his time, he wanted to create for the purpose an awareness of the ills and weaknesses the Muslims as well as their religious and intellectual leaders were suffering from; to tell them how the devil of earthly passions had taken hold of the different sections of society, and, to let them realise what factors were responsible for diverting their attention from the true content of faith to its outer forms, rituals and customs, thus making them oblivious of the eternal life and the will and pleasure of God In order, therefore, to achieve the end he had in view, al-Ghazali undertook a detailed analysis of the intellectual and moral approach of the then society towards life and the world; highlighted the vices of different sections; defined the aims and the methods necessary to achieve those objectives; delineated the individual and communal obligations of the people;

1 *Al-Ghazali*, pp. 48-49.

brought out the distinguishing features and differences between secular and religious sciences ; invited the attention of the affluent and ruling classes towards their shortcomings; criticised the unjust laws and rules promulgated by the state; and exhorted them to give up their un-Islamic ways, customs and usages. It was thus the first detailed sociological study in Islam which brought out courageously and poignantly the social and moral ills of the society and suggested measures for its reform and transformation into a healthy community.

The Religious Preceptors :

Al-Ghazali held the religious doctors, the *'Ulema*, responsible for the all round religious and moral degeneration of the Muslim peoples To him, religious doctors were the salt of the earth ; if they went astray, nothing could keep the people on the right path. An Arab poet has expressed the same idea in these words .

> "O ! teachers of Faith, you are the salt of the earth.
> If the salt gets contaminated, what is there to purify it again."[1]

Complaining that the prevailing widespread vices were accountable to the negligence of religious teachers, al-Ghazali writes :

> "The third reason, which really constitutes an incurable disease, is that the patients there are but no physicians are available for their treatment. *'Ulema* are the physicians but these days they are themselves confined to the sick-bed and unable to cure others "[2]

The same reason has been attributed by al-Ghazali for the waywardness of the rulers and kings.

He writes :

> "In short, the debasement of the people proceeds from the corruption of their rulers, who get perverted on account of the demoralization of the doctors of religion. Had

1 *Ihyā'*, Vol I, p 54
2 *Ibid* , Vol I, p 54

there been no self-seeking Cadis and religious scholars, the rulers would not have become so depraved, for, in that case, they would have had to be mindful of the warnings of the *'Ulema*."[1]

The neglect of the then *'Ulema* to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, as the savants of the old used to do, was severely criticised by al-Ghazali. He deplored the timidness of the religious teachers of his time who were not courageous enough to uphold what was right in the face of kings because they had been infected by the love of wealth, power and honour. After citing numerous instances where the *'Ulema* had fearlessly stood against the injustice of powerful despots and tyrannical rulers, he says in the *Ihyā'*:

> "This is how the learned enjoined the right and forbade the wrong. They did not care at all for the pomp and glory of the kings for they used to put their trust in God alone and were confident that He would protect them They were ever willing to lay down their lives for the sake of a righteous cause, if God so desired. Whatever they said was taken to heart, for, their intentions were pure, their immaculate sincerity moulded even the hard-hearted brutes; but, now, the earthly temptations have made them dumb, and even if they speak out it has no effect because they lack sincerity. They can be effective even now if they cultivate selflessness, detachment and earnestness People have become depraved because of their rulers; and, the rulers, because of the *'Ulema*, who have been demoralised on account of their love for wealth, power and honour
>
> One who has been infected by worldly temptations cannot admonish even the lowly and the poor much less the elites and kings "[2]

Most of the religious scholars of his day, as Ghazali pointed out, had given themselves up to the hair-splitting of juristic issues

1 *Ihyā'*, Vol II, p 132
2 *Ibid.*, Vol II, p 312.

and cavilling of real or imaginary problems In social gatherings and religious meetings, royal courts and scholarly seminars specious contentions of a juristic nature had come to be regarded as an inevitable intellectual diversion. It had become such a rage in those times that in their craze to arm themselves for a knock-out victory in the debates and disputations, the scholars were neglecting all other branches of learning including even the religious sciences—the knowledge necessary for spiritual and moral rectitude or for the preparation of the life in the Hereafter. Al-Ghazali protests against this state of affairs in the *Ihyā'* in these words:

> "If any scholar-jurist is asked about the virtues and vices like patience and thankfulness, fear and awe, envy and malice, hypocrisy and deception, contentment and earnestness or how to avoid hankering after the praise and respect by others, he would not be able to give any answer although he ought to know these as the preparation for life in the world-to-come depends on them On the other hand, if you ask him about *li'ān*, *zihār*, *sabaq* or *rami*, he will give out a detailed description of each although one seldom comes across these issues, and, if anybody does need a juristic opinion on these matters, he can easily obtain it in every town. These scholars thus devote their entire time and energy in learning and teaching the details of similar insignificant issues but remain oblivious of the knowledge essential for a religious teacher. If these scholars are ever asked about it, their reply is that they are engaged in acquiring a religious knowledge which constitutes a communal obligation (*Fardh-i-Kafāyah*) enjoined by the *Shari'ah* They are really keeping their own-selves in dark and deceiving others, for, as everybody knows, he who wants to acquit himself of a communal obligation should first discharge the obligations enjoined on him personally. Also, there are many other communal obligations which claim a preference, as, for example, we have many non-Muslim physicians in the city whose evidence is not

acceptable under the *Shan'ah* in religious matters requiring medical opinion. But we do not find any scholar turning to the study of medicine. Students overcrowd the classrooms of the sciences pertaining to jurisprudence, logic and dialectics although there are hundreds of jurisconsults who are ever willing to let one have their legal opinions I fail to understand how these scholars can defend their engagement in a communal obligation which is being already performed by numerous *'Ulema*, while disregarding another obligation which is not being attended by anyone. Is there any reason for it except that the study of medicine cannot help them to secure trusteeship of the charitable trusts, enforcement of the wills, guardianship of the orphans and management of their property, appointment to the posts of judges and official jurists, respect and honour in governmental circles or a precedence over their compatriots, friends and foes ?"[1]

At another place in the *Ihya*" he writes :

"There is not a town in which several matters do not assume the position of joint or communal obligations, but there is none to look after these nor any scholar pays any heed to them. Take, for instance, the study of medicine There are a number of towns in which there is no practising physician whose evidence is admissible in law, but the scholars lack all interest in this profession. Similar is the case with the obligation incumbent on all Muslims to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong (but it is being overlooked by everybody) "[2]

Al-Ghazali laments over the general lack of interest in and apathy of the people towards the tenets of faith and calls attention towards the need of spreading literacy and disseminating the knowledge of religion After emphasising the paramount need for spreading religious knowledge he continues :

"For anyone who is solicitous of his religion, the

1. *Ihya*", Vol I, p 19
2 *Ibid.*, Vol I, p 38.

teaching and spreading the knowledge of the faith, which is also a joint obligation, is such a serious occupation that it would not permit him to go into unnecessary juristic details and waste his time in any scholastic hair-splitting or similar other trivialities "[1]

Al-Ghazali explained why the wrangling over disputed issues had come to assume such an importance among the pedagogues of his time who, in due course, had began to devote their time and energy to those fruitless quibblings. Tracing the history of these vain disputations he writes :

> "The Caliphs succeeding the Prophet of Islam, were scholars and jurists, competent to give juristic opinions in all matters and they seldom required the help of other companions of the Prophet in this task. The learned among the companions, therefore, occupied themselves with the studies and orisons leading to salvation in the world-to-come If they were ever asked for any legal opinion, they would refer the question to another jurist and remain absorbed in the recollection of God. Numerous instances of this kind have been preserved by the annalists. Thereafter, undeserving and incompetent persons came to preside over the Islamic commonwealth. They were also incompetent to give legal opinions or settle the disputes of the people and, therefore, they had of necessity to depend upon the jurisconsults in the administration of justice. The scholars among the descendants of the companions of the Holy Prophet generally followed in the footsteps of the scholars of the old ; they were aware of the true content of the faith, were selfless and detached, and hence they avoided the company of the rulers and kings. The Ummayyad and the ʿAbbāsid Caliphs had to look round for them and implore them to accept the offices of jurists and judges. The plebeian masses of the time, who witnessed

1. *Ihyā'*, Vol. I, pp. 37-38.

the solicitations of the kings and disdainful indifference of the devout scholar-jurists, thought that the study of juristic sciences was the easiest way to acqure riches and honour as well as to gain an access into the entourage of the nobility. These elements, therefore, themselves applied for the governmental offices and manoeuvred to win the favour of rulers and administrators in the hope of achieving worldly success. Some of them gained their end while others licked the dust but even those who did succeed had to humble themselves by applying for these offices They had to come down from the exalted place of scholars to that of plebeians Another result of it was that the scholars who were earlier implored to accept these offices began to offer themselves as candidates , earlier they were honoured for their selfless detachment from the ruling circles but now they lost their respect by becoming the henchmen of the kings and rulers. A few scholars were, however, an exception to it in every age .

"The analogical deductions drawn up on legal or theological questions in accordance with the principles of jurisprudence and the teaching of the *Shan*ᶜ*ah*, were needed primarily to meet the requirements of administration and justice during the earlier times. In due course, however, the nobles and administrators too cultivated an interest in these matters and they began to encourage the scholars to discuss theseissues in their presence. In view of the interest taken by the nobility in these discussions, people began to devote themselves to the study of dialectics, numerous treatises came to be written on the science of disputation; rules were evolved for these debates and gradually the wranglings were turned into an art of logical syllogism These persons tried to justify their endeavours on the ground that their aim was to protect the scripture and the *Sunnah* and to oppose the innovations and deviations Those who were earlier engaged in giving legal opinions had also made a similar claim that they intended to serve the faith and the

people by helping them to settle their disputes.

"A few rulers and administrators of the later times, undoubtedly, looked upon the dialectics and disputations with disfavour for they thought that these polemics gave rise to academic orthodoxy and quarrelsome disputes, and not unoften even to violent strife and blood-shed. On the other hand, there were also nobles and chiefs desirous of finding out which of the two schools of Islamic jurisprudence, Hanafite or Shafe'ite, was nearer to the right path. These elements encouraged discussions and debates on juristic issues. The scholars belonging to their entourage, accordingly, put aside all the dialectical quibblings on other issues and took up the controversies between these two juristic schools, overlooking the differences of opinion between other jurists such as Mālik ibn Anas, Sufyān Thauri and Ahmad ibn Hanbal, simply because their masters were not interested in their differences Laying a claim to the refinement and amplification the *corpus juris* of Islamic law, and to formulation of the principles of analogical deduction, these scholars compiled innumerable dissertations on the subject, cultivated logical syllogism and developed it into a science of ratiocination They are still preoccupied with this vocation and only God knows to what extent they would go. Thus, the reason for undue interest taken by the scholars in these controversies and contentious reasonings is what we have stated above If the nobility or the powers that be were to take interest in the juristical differences of the schools other than those of Abū Hanīfa and al-Shāfe'ī, these people would immediately start quibbling over the questions relating to those schools. And, they would still claim that their aim is simply to acquire knowledge and to seek the pleasure of God "[1]

After tracing the origin of contentious debates, al-Ghazali sets forth in some detail the ill-effects springing from these

1 *Ihyā'*, Vol I, p 38

wranglings. He also describes his own experiences since he had himself earlier taken a keen interest in such polemics.[1]

The vocabulary employed to denote the new sciences then being cultivated was also creating a misunderstanding Words or phrases occurring in the Qurʿān, Traditions of the Prophet or the sayings or works of his companions were being widely used for the new sciences being evolved in those times To give a few examples, the word *fiqah* (legal theology) was being commonly used for the intricate and hypothetical details of legal questions as well as for the differences in legal opinions in regard to such issues, *ʿilm* (knowledge) was a common term employed to describe all sorts of learning, religious or secular The scholasticism or logical syllogism was known as *tawhid* (Unity of Godhead) *tazkīr* (recollection or act of devotion to God) was the name assigned for all sorts of lectures replete with fantastic tales while *hikmat* (wisdom) denoted occult and uncommon practices With their indiscriminate use the peculiar sense conveyed by these terms in the context of the Qurʾānic text and the *Sunnah* had come to be associated with these new sciences as well Thus, the Qurʾānic verse *so that they may understand religion* and the Tradition *God grants understanding of religion to those who intend to be virtuous* were applied to the unforeseeable legal quibblings, the Divine tidings that *those granted wisdom* (*in religion*) *have been bestowed a great favour* was appropriated to philosophy and scholasticisms of the fifth century, and the verse of the Qurʾān *remember God, for ye may be one of the devoted* was employed for the vile sermons of the ignorant and misguided preachers Al-Ghazali explained how these words were being used out of their context to mean something which these terms were never intended to convey He traced the original meanings of these words and phrases which had not only been lost owing to their misuse but which also differed widely from the sense conveyed during his times[2] The analysis made by al-Ghazali was as much instructive as it was

1 *Ihyāʾ*, Vol I, pp 40-43
2 *Ibid*, Vol I, pp 28-34

helpful in removing the misconceived notions created by the careless and indiscriminate use of religious terminology which was being employed as a vehicle for the furtherance of the new sciences.

Critique of the Rulers and Kings :

Al-Ghazali held that alongwith the religious scholars, kings and rulers, administrators and nobles were also responsible for the widespread moral and spiritual degeneration of the people ʿAbdullah ibn Mubārak had also expressed the same feeling in regard to the kings and nobles two hundred years before al-Ghazali in his famous verse saying

> "And who pollutes religion excepting the kings, nobles and the priestly order ?"

Unmindful of his personal safety al-Ghazali stood up against the unjust ways of the powerful despots and autocratic rulers who considered themselves above every law It was a common practice amongst the scholars in those days to accept donations or stipends granted by the then kings Al-Ghazali was, however, courageous enough to denounce these awards as unlawful He declared that these grants were, at best, doubtful and at worst, prohibited He writes

> "The revenues accruing to the kings these days are mostly prohibited, for they seldom have a lawful income, or, if they have any, it is only paltry "[1]

Again he says

> "The income of the kings in our times is either entirely prohibited or its major portion comes under this category. There is nothing surprising in it because we find now-a-days no trace of the lawful sources like the poor-due, spoils of war, etc. No income from these sources generally reaches the king. Among the lawful sources, only poll-tax remains now, but numerous unjust means are employed in the recovery of these dues, which are not

1. *Ihyā'*, Vol II, p. 120

allowed by the *Shar'ah* The officials of the State exceed the prescribed limits both in regard to the amounts to be recovered and the persons to be assessed for the poll-tax The conditions laid down for assessment of this tax are also disregarded. Apart from these sources of income, the coffers of the state are also filled with riches extracted from the Muslims far in excess of the tributes of the lands held by them, confiscations, illegal gratifications and similar other taxes which are collected even more mercilessly than the poll-tax "[1]

Al-Ghazali maintained that since the riches amassed by the kings was either unlawful or at least of a doubtful nature from the view-point of the *Shar'ah*, it was advisable that no grants or donations out of it should be accepted by a scholar Such an income, he held, was not conducive to the spiritual advancement of the recipient He further argued that instances of scholars accepting royal grants in the past could undoubtedly be cited but that was a world altogether different from that of his own times In this connection he writes

"The despotic rulers of the past, because of being nearer in time to the right-guided Caliphs, were at least conscious of their tyrannical ways and hence they were ever eager to win the favour of the companions of the Prophet and their associates and descendants Since these rulers of the old were anxious that their favours should be accepted by the devout scholars, they made these presentations of their own accord and without any strings attached to their donations They even expressed gratitude for the acceptance of their grants The religious savants, on the other hand, accepted these presentations only to distribute these among the poor and the needy At the same time, these mentors of the old never sided with the rulers in the furtherance of their political ends They never paid visits to kings and chieftains nor did they ever

1 *Ihyā'*, Vol II, p. 122

encourage the latter to call upon them It was not unoften that they warned the kings for their irreligious actions or even cursed them for their tyrannical ways. Thus, these scholars accepted the presentations of the then rulers because there was no danger of any harmful effect to the faith on account of it.

"The kings now-a-days have, however, only such scholars on their pay-rolls whom they hope to win over to their side for certain ulterior motives or those who would be willing to act as their entourages and sing their praises The vices flowing out of the acceptance of such favour are many: first, the recipient has to endure humiliation; secondly, he has to pay visits to the donor; thirdly, he has to be lavish in his praise for the grantor, fourthly, he is required to help the donor in realising his ends; fifthly, he has to dance attendance on the ruler like other courtiers; sixthly, he has always to express gratitude and assure the donor of his help, and, seventhly, he has to hold his tongue over the tyrannies and misdeeds of the kings. The rulers now-a-days would not extend their help to anybody who is not willing to accept even one of these conditions, no matter whether he be an erudite scholar of al-Shāfeʿī's fame. It is because of these reasons that it is not lawful now for anyone to accept donations from the kings, even if one knows that the latter have derived their income through lawful means There is thus absolutely no justification for accepting grants out of the revenues which have been mobilised through prohibited or even doubtful means. Now, if anybody still unashamedly accepts the donations from these rulers and quotes the companions of the Prophet and their successors as a precedent, he perhaps considers the angels to be peers of blacksmiths, for, he cannot avoid waiting upon the rulers or even their chiefs and officials and playing second fiddle to them And, these are all sins.

"I have now explained the sources of lawful and unlawful income accruing to the kings. If, however, anybody

still deems it practicable to obtain a grant drawn out of lawful revenues, and he also deserves the same or gets it without in any way asking for the same or having to please the king or his chieftains, or else the donation does not depend on any service to be rendered in return thereof, then it may be lawful to accept the same, but I would still advise that it is preferable to refuse it if only on account of the evils likely to follow in the wake of its acceptance."[1]

Al-Ghazali did not merely advice to forsake the donations and grants from the kings, he went even further to stress that one ought completely to disassociate oneself with them and hate their tyrannical and despotic ways. He writes in the *Ihyā'*:

"Secondly, one should be so completely cut off from the kings that he may never come across them. It is obligatory and, indeed, safety lies in it that one should hate them for their tyranny. He should never entreat God's blessings for them nor praise them, nor else seek acquintance of their courtiers One should not even desire to know anything about them."[2]

We are living in a democratic age when freedom of speech and expression is more or less assured in almost every country of the world. It is rather difficult to visualise the amount of courage al-Ghazah had had to muster, and the grave danger to which he exposed himself by openly preaching disassociation with the rulers or advising refusal of their grants, and criticising them for their tyrannical and un-Islamic policies in the social, political and fiscal matters. For the despotic and autocratic rulers, as the kings generally were in those days, even the slightest criticism of the state or its policies or officials was a sufficient mark of treason, and the heads of eminent scholars and reputed personages rolled on the ground at the slightest displeasure of those tyrants. However, throwing all considerations of personal safety to the winds, al-Ghazali preached

1 *Ihyā'*, Vol II, pp 122-123
2 *Ibid* Vol II, p 128

and practised what he considered to be right and never faltered from the duty of severely admonishing the arrogant kings of his time. Sultan Sanjar, the son of Seljukid King Malik Shah, was the Governor of Khurasān. Once al-Ghazali happened to see him in his court. Addressing Sanjar, he said before his courtiers:

> "It is indeed regrettable that the necks of the Muslims are breaking under the crushing burden of thy tyranny, while those of thy horses are over burdened with expensive harness."[1]

Muhammad, the elder brother of Sanjar, succeeded his father Malik Shah. Al-Ghazali wrote a detailed letter in the form of a treatise exhorting him to inculcate the awe of God, fulfil his obligations as a king and work for the betterment of his people.

Administration was generally in the hands of ministers in the times of al-Ghazali. He, therefore, paid more attention to them than to the Seljukid kings for bringing about reforms in administration. He wrote detailed letters and directives inviting their attention to the mismanagement, maladministration, inefficiency, illegal exhortions and high handedness of the State officials. Al-Ghazali reminded them of their responsibility before God and invited their attention towards the fate earlier tyrannical rulers and administrators had met, as a consequence of their oppressive administrative policies. The letters written by al-Ghazali to the then ministers of Seljukid kings mirror his personal courage, the desire for exposition of truth and effectiveness of his pungent mode of expression.

In one of his letters to a Minister, Fakhar ul-Mulk, he wrote:

> "You should know that this city (Tūs) had been laid waste by famine and tyranny. Everyone was scared by the news of your presence in Safra'in and Damaghān; cultivators sold their produce and hooligans behaved nicely with the populace. Now that you are far away, the fear has taken flight from these elements. The bully has again taken heart and the farmers and grocers are

1. *Al-Ghazali*, p. 24.

indulging in black-marketing Anybody sending you a report contrary to what I have stated is not your well-wisher. . . Verily, the solemn invocation of the oppressed in Tūs would surely be answered by the Lord I counselled the Governor of Tūs but he did not pay any heed to me until an example was made out of him by the divine justice . . . My solemn admonitions would undoubtedly appear distasteful to you but I would not have dared to write this letter, if I had not cast away all temptations of earthly favours out of my heart Pay heed to me for you would not be counselled like this by anyone after me Only those can admonish you who do not allow their selfishness to conceal the Truth."[1]

In a letter to Mujir ud-din, another minister, he says

"Now that the tyranny has reached its limits, it has become incumbent on you to succour the oppressed I was a witness to this state of affairs for a year or so, I then migrated from Tūs in order to avoid casting a glance over those ignoble oppressors Now that I have returned to Tūs, I find that the oppression is still continuing."[2]

After inviting the attention of Mujir ud-din to the despicable fate met by earlier ministers, al-Ghazali continues

"The ministers, before you, met a fate which none had met before them But now I see oppression and destruction which I had never witnessed earlier. You may not be pleased with this state of affairs but when these oppressors will be called up on the Day of Requital, everyone responsible for their tyranny, even in the remotest possible way, will be asked to render an explanation for it The Muslims of this place are extremely aggrieved The officials have collected quite a substantial amount from the populace, many times more than the money sent by you for distribution among the poor, but it has not been remitted

1 *Maktūbāt*, pp. 36-38

2 *Ibid*, pp 62-63

to the king. These people have misappropriated the entire amount."[1]

Other Classes of the Muslim Society :

Al-Ghazali had also made a deep study of the religious and moral life of the other sections of society besides the scholars, kings and chieftains. He has left a detailed description of numerous innovations and deviations, customs and rites, in short, all aspects of mundane life which had somehow or the other found a place in the life of the different sections of the then society. It is remarkable that apart from being a profound scholar of religion, al-Ghazali was also such a keen observer of social life that no aspect of the life of the people escaped his attention. He has devoted one section of the *Ihyā'* to such customs as violate the dictates of the *Shari'ah* although they do not apparently seem to do so. In this section he leaves untouched no aspect of individual or social life—from the mosque to the market and from the baths to the social gatherings—and enumerates the practices which are prohibited and ought to be given up.[2]

Another section of the book deals with those people who were suffering from one or the other misconceived notions which impeded the improvement of their character. This section is concerned with the people who were suffering from different types of self-deceptions, weaknesses, fallacies, illusions and paradoxes. The survey includes the affluent, nobles, scholars, mystics and similar other classes of rank and distinction, exhibiting a keen insight into their mental and emotional life which can be expected from an expert psychologist only. His study reveals the elements of misgivings and illusions of which the people concerned would have themselves been hardly aware

The scholars in al-Ghazali's time had generally developed an extremism in the cultivation and practice of their different branches of learning which had obscured from their view the

1 *Maktūbāt*, p. 67.

2. *Ihyā'*, Vol II, pp 294-299.

essence of the true faith. Jurists were stretching their legal quibblings too far to include all sorts of futile juristic issues, dialecticians deemed it worthwhile to engage in specious reasoning and irrelevant polemics, traditionists busied themselves with unnecessary researches into the terms and phrases used in the Traditions and their derivatives; while mystics considered it an act of devotion to commit the writings of their masters to memory Al-Ghazali vigorously criticised all these people and brought out succinctly the misconceptions under which they were labouring. Summing up the discussion in this regard he writes:

> "The secular sciences pertaining to mathematics, medicine and other useful arts do not produce so much self-deception among their students as is born out of the religious sciences. This is because nobody ever thinks of these branches of learning as a means of attaining salvation in the Hereafter; whereas, the study of religious sciences is itself, apart from its aim and the ultimate result desired of it, very often taken as leading to salvation."[1]

Alongwith the religious scholars, al-Ghazali brought the pious and the mystics too under the focus of his criticism. In highlighting their mistakes and misconceptions, self-deceptions and the show of assumed piety, al-Ghazali disclosed how a number of devotional practices were really unimportant and worthless, and that the motive behind several of these devotional acts was not a sincere desire to serve God but simply to satisfy one's ownself or others, or else to seek respect and honour [2]

Turning to the affluent and well-to-do sections of the society al-Ghazali has made certain pertinent observations of far-reaching importance:

> "There are many amongst the men of substance who are too liberal in spending their wealth on the performance of *Hajj*. They set out for the pilgrimage regularly year after year as if they have none hungry or in want amongst

1 *Ihyā'*, Vol III, p 343
2. *Ibid*, Vol III, pp 345-350

their neighbours. ʿAbdullah ibn Masʿūd truly said that during the later times quite a large number of persons would perform the *Hajj* unnecessarily, simply because they would find it easy to travel and would have enough to spend, but they would return from the *Hajj* without any recompense for they would not help their fellow-travellers whom they would find in trouble.

"Abū Nasr Tammār relates that somebody informed Bishr ibn al-Harith of his intention to set out for the *Hajj*. Bishr asked, 'What have you got to meet the expenses ?"

The man replied, 'Two thousand *dirhams*.'

'And what is the purpose of your journey', demanded Bishr again, 'Do you want to make a show of your piety, visit the Kaʿaba or seek the pleasure of God ?"

He replied, 'To seek the pleasure of God.'

'All right', said Bishr, 'but would you agree, if I tell you a method whereby you would attain the pleasure of God without having to go all the way for *Hajj* ? You would undoubtedly spend the money you have, but you would also be satisfied that you have done something that would be liked by the Lord '

After the man had given his assent Bishr told him, 'Then you should distribute the amount you have set aside for the *Hajj* among ten insolvent persons so that they may be able to pay off their debts, or to paupers who may live on it, or to the orphans or persons in indigent circumstances. If you like, you may give the entire amount to a single person because rendering help to the poor or the needy or any one in trouble is better than performing a hundred voluntary *Hajjs*. Now you should do as I have told you but if you have any hesitation, tell me about it.'

'The truth is', the man rejoined, 'that I want to undertake the journey.'

Bishr smiled and remarked : 'When the money is obtained from prohibited or doubtful sources, the insinuating-self of man urges him to gratify its desires which it

often brings forth in the garb of virtuous acts to deceive him God Almighty has, however, decided that He would accept the deeds of only those who fear him "[1]

"Another group among the moneyed but niggardly persons is more interested in such devotional acts on which nothing is to be spent They like to keep fasts, offer prayers or recite the Qur'ān These persons too are deceiving themselves because stinginess has captured their souls They ought to spend their money in order to cure themselves of the malady but they keep themselves busy in the acts which are really not required of them These elements are like the man who is about to be bitten by a snake and of which he would undoubtedly die, but he keeps himself busy in preparing a syrup for relieving his cough These miserly persons do not stand in need of the aforesaid devotional acts as that foolish man would not be cured of the snake-bite by his syrup Once somebody told Bishr that a certain wealthy person was profusely keeping fasts and offering prayers He replied, 'The poor fellow is doing the work of others but has given up his own He was required to feed the hungry and help the poor Instead, he is forcing his ownself to remain hungry and is trying to help himself by offering voluntary prayers Along with this, he is also busy in accumulating as much wealth as possible so as to exclude the poor from it'."[2]

In regard to another self-deception from which people generally suffer, al-Ghazali says

"There are still others, both among the well-to-do and the poor, who are victims of self-deception for they consider it sufficient enough to attend the religious discourses and sermons They regularly attend such gatherings and think that it is propitious to listen to these discourses even without acting on the counsel of the preachers These

1 *Ihyā'*, Vol III, pp 351-352
2 *Ibid*, Vol III, p. 352

persons are deceiving themselves because the merit of these sermons lies simply in their exhortation to adopt the righteous course But if the sermons create no urge for virtuous action, then they are simply valueless Anything used as a means for achieving an end has importance because of its objective and if it cannot somehow be helpful in achieving the object, it becomes worthless. But these persons are led astray by the merit of listening to such discourses, unduly emphasised by certain preachers. Often such listeners are found in a melting mood or even in a flood of tears during the discourses but they never make up their mind to tread the righteous path. If these persons are told something dreadful, they begin to implore God and seek His protection, but they appear to think that it is all they need to propitiate the Lord. It is nothing but self-deception Such a person is like a patient who consults the physician simply to gain knowledge of the prescription but he can never regain his health by it. Or, else, he resembles one who is hungry but cannot fill his belly merely by learning the name of different types of edibles.

"Being attentive to the preachers and hearing the details of doctrines and devotional practices would likewise be of no avail in the life-to-come unless it makes you change your life and pattern it in a manner that it may inculcate awe and remembrance of God. If the sermons do not produce this effect and do not make you weary of this-worldliness, then these will be produced as an evidence against you in the Hearafter. Verily, if you think that simply listening to these sermons would be enough for your salvation, you are deceiving yourself."[1]

Purpose of the Ihyā'

Ihyā' ʿUlūm id-Dīn is not merely a book of criticism. One of the objectives underlying this book is to reform and Islamise the

1 *Ihyā'*, Vol III, p 352

Muslim society. Al-Ghazali really intended to produce a work which might be self-sufficient not only for the education and discipline of the seekers after truth but that it might also be an adequate guide-book for the educators and preachers, serve as an encyclopædia of Islamic sciences and may be used as a manual of injunctions for the Islamic way of life. He succeeded in making the book a compendium of Islamic beliefs and practices, measures required for purification of the soul, disciplines of moral conduct and cultivation of a mystical awareness of the truth. The book also presents an striking example of its effectiveness. Many of us would have shared the experience of Shibli Na'omani who says that "every word of this book has a magnetic effect on its reader, it takes hold of him and pulls the strings of his heart. This over bearing effect of the *Ihya'* is perhaps because it was written by al-Ghazali at a time when he was himself filled and deeply impressed with a feeling of higher awakening."[1]

The inner experience of unseen realities giving an insight into the higher realms, through which al-Ghazali had himself passed, and which is reflected in the *Ihyā'*, sometimes makes its readers disenchanted with the world It creates a longing for solitude and penitence, contemplation and devotion and produces an awe and reverence of God peculiar to the mystic way of life which is often harmful for the health. The writer of these pages has himself experienced these feelings while going through the *Ihyā'* for the compilation of this book It is perhaps for this reason that the mentors of mystic disciplines do not advise the novices to go through the *Ihyā'* in initial stages. Perfect moderation and temperance can indeed be had only through the study of the Traditions and the biography of the Prophet and the company of a religious teacher who has modelled his life in accordance with the teachings of the *Shari'ah*

Ethical Philosophy of al-Ghazali :

Besides being an eminent scholar, jurist, dialectician and a

1. *Al-Ghazali*, p 48

mystic, al-Ghazali was also a propounder of the Islamic ethics. His studies in ethical philosophy fathom the mystries of head and heart and exhibit a penetrating insight into the eternal values of life. In fact al-Ghazali has left such an indelible mark on the subsequent thought that no study of Islamic ethics and ethical philosophy can be deemed complete without a mention of al-Ghazali's thought and his writings on the subject.[1] The *Ihyā'* is a masterpiece of al-Ghazali on this subject too in which he, like a true thinker, sets out to examine the innate psychological dispositions and impulses actuating ethical behaviour.

Yearning for Honour (Jāh):

Under the caption "Why man has a natural longing for honour (Jāh) and why it seldom leaves even the heart of a penitent," al-Ghazali writes in the *Ihyā'*

"One must know that exactly for the same reason which makes wealth dearer to man, he inculcates the love of *Jāh* Just as gold is liked more than silver, even if the two be of the same value, *Jāh* claims precedence over riches As you know, gold and silver have no attraction in themselves for these can neither satisfy hunger nor can be put on. these are just as good as any other metal, but these have an allurement because they serve as a means of satisfying the desires held dearer by man Similar is the case with *Jāh* which means winning and dominating the heart of others

"However, despite the fact that *Jāh* and wealth equally share the fancy of man, the former claims precedence over the other for reasons more than one. There are three conspicuous reasons for it. The first of these is that *Jāh* can be a means for attaining riches while the latter may not be helpful in commanding the respect of others. Anybody winning the hearts of others wins their services and

1 *Tārikh ul-Akhlāq*, p 200, also *see Falsafatul Akhlāq*

belongings too as people are always desirous of making presentations to those whom they love and revere On the other hand, if an undistinguished plebeian somehow gets hold of a treasure, he cannot win the respect of others merely by getting rich *Jāh* is, thus held dearer than wealth.

"Another obvious reason is that there is always a danger of losing wealth It can be stolen or taken away forcibly, kings and tyrants can confiscate it It also needs to be guarded and kept in boxes and strong-rooms, but once a man wins the heart of anyone, there is no danger of its being lost to thieves, robbers, or plunderers It is indeed the most well-guarded treasure The treasure of heart, on the other hand, is immune from all these dangers

"The third reason for holding *Jāh* dearer is that it goes on increasing by itself without requiring any effort to be made for it When people begin to venerate anyone on account of his knowledge or virtuous actions, they sing his praise thereby widening the circle of his followers It is thus only natural that everybody should hanker after fame and honour When the fame spreads to other towns and lands, the number of admirers too increases with it As against this, wealth does not increase by itself. These are the manifest reasons for giving preference to *Jāh* over wealth One can also find many other reasons for it

"Now, it can be argued that if what I have explained here is correct a man should like to have riches or *Jāh* only to the extent of fulfilling his desires or meeting his wants, for, he holds these dear only for achieving these ends But, the fact is that the covetousness of man knows no bounds and he goes on accumulating possessions and riches till the limits of his needs are left far behind and he presents the spectacle of one alluded to in the Tradition which says *If a man has two valleys filled with gold, he would long for the third.* Similarly, a man is always anxious that his *Jāh* should go on increasing till his fame reaches the far off

lands, although he knows that he would never step into those countries and meet their inhabitants

"The answer to the question posed earlier is that, in truth and reality, love of *Jāh* produces an intoxication which can hardly be eradicated There are two reasons for this. One of these is manifest and can be conceived by everyone But the other one being related to a peculiar trait of the human-self, is so subtle and latent that it would be difficult even for the most intelligent to grasp it fully It can be understood only by those who are endowed by the brilliance of mind and have a deep insight into the psychological nature of man

"The first of the two causes is that man always feels an innate uneasiness on account of the fears and doubts in regard to that which he holds dear and accordingly wants to ward off all dangers, real or imaginary, from it As a poet has said· 'To fall in love is to fall in a thousand anxieties'

"Man is never satisfied, no matter whatever provisions he has made to meet his necessities The doubt that he might lose his possessions, later on, always assails his heart and this makes him sad and anxious This anxiety can be removed only in case he gets something which can be a substitute for the possessions which he fears to lose Again, on account of his self-love and eagerness for a long life, he overestimates his necessities for the future, and wants adequate resources to counterbalance the imaginary perils to his means. He is always worried about the supposed hazards which might make him lose his resources The only effective remedy he can think of against these risks is to have so much estate and effects that if he somehow loses a part of it, he may be able to manage easily with the remaining assets left with him The doubt and fear in regard to future security never allow him to be content with his existing belongings and he yields to the desire of possessing the fortunes of the entire world The Prophet

of Islam has very rightly said that the longing for two things viz , for knowledge and wealth is never satisfied The desire for *Jāh* or winning the hearts of men is also insatiable precisely for the same reason.

"Another reason, and a more cogent one than the first, is that the Spirit is a command by God. The Qur'ān says. *They will ask thee concerning the Spirit. Say. The Spirit is by command of my Lord*[1] The command by the Lord means that it is a secret which can be experienced by the illuminated masters through beatific visions but cannot be divulged. The Prophet of Islam too did not disclose the reality of Spirit but, without going into its reality, one can find out that the heart of man has four-fold predispositions The first of these is a beastly inclining towards eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, etc. The second pertains to what may be called a ferocious leaning towards killing, injuring and hurting others The third element of human nature is devilish having a predisposition towards deceit and fraud Along with these propensities, there is another one relating to the divine nature of man which seeks expression in the divine attributes like beneficence, dignity, grandeur, respect and glory The heart of man has numerous similar predispositions which cannot be gone into in any detail here, but, as stated, one of the important inclinations of the heart, owing to the Spirit being a command by the Lord, pertains to the quality of perfection. And, what this perfection is? It consists of being unrivalled in perfection and owning an existence not dependent on another for anything

"Man is thus naturally inclined towards perfection since it is a divine quality— a quality which does not admit of any peer or rival, for that would really constitute a defect in perfection The perfection of the sun lies in the fact that it is the only sun Likewise, the perfection

1 *Bani Israil*, 85

of *Being* is enjoyed by God Almighty alone for there is no perfect *Being* besides Him Whatever exists besides Him is simply His creation and cannot exist on its own. Thus, in very truth, nothing exists without God, for, sharing any quality with Him presupposes an equality which is a defect for the unrivalled perfection of God Almighty Just as the sun illuminates everything in this world without losing its perfection, God also bestows existence to everything. It is on Him that the existence of everything depends in this universe Unrivalled perfection is thus a divine attribute to which man has a natural predisposition Some of the mystics have observed that in the recesses of his heart everyman nourishes the same feeling which found expression from Pharaoh when he said *I am your Lord, Most High* It is because of this reason that man finds it more pleasing to become an object of homage and reverence than to become himself a devotee or a worshipper This is a natural human instinct which is alluded to in the divine revelation which says that the *Spirit is by command of my Lord*

"Man cannot, however, attain absolute or unrivalled perfection, but his desire for it persists because he derives a sort of satisfaction from it Absolute perfection is the end and not the means of achieving anything else. The fact is that every man adores his self as well as its absolute perfection, he shudders at the idea of death simply because he sees the annihilation of his self and of its perfection in his death Absolute perfection, on the one hand, demands complete independence from every thing for its existence and, on the other, dependence of every other existence on it If, however, that be not possible, the next best course desired by it is to dominate others Man desiring complete perfection has, thus, a natural inclination towards predominance over others Domination over others is gratifying to the self and a means of achieving perfection. It consists of the capacity to be effective and the ability to make others

change their will Accordingly, man wants to dominate over every other being but the latter consists of objects, some of which do not admit of any change in accordance with the human will, as, for instance, the Supreme Being and His attributes. There is another category of objects which undergoes change but not in conformity with the human desire, and these are the heavens, planets, angels, *jinn*, devils, mountains, oceans, and the like The objects falling in the third category such as land, its elements, minerals, plants, animals and also the hearts of men, are liable to change under the influence of human will Now, the objects of the first two categories being outside the scope of human influence, man endeavours to acquire knowledge of these objects, for, acquiring the knowledge of anything is also a means of gaining domination over it. You see the keenness of some people to have an insight into the reality of the nature and attributes of God, angels, heavens, planets, stars, oceans and their wonders This is also a way of acquiring some domination over these You would have seen that if a man cannot himself manufacture something that catches his fascination, he wants atleast to know how it had been made because this gives him some satisfaction A man who cannot himself invent a game like chess or any other device, wants atleast to know how it is played or used and how it was invented He finds his ignorance vexatious and the knowledge enchanting since he wants to make up some of his own deficiency through his knowledge

"Of the earthly things over which man desires predominance in order to utilise them according to his wishes, there are two sub-divisions, firstly, those pertaining to body, and, secondly, those belonging to spirit The first comprises possessions and belongings, wealth and resources on which man wants complete domination He wants complete authority to use these in whatever manner he desires because authority is necessary for perfection

dominance is one of the attributes of God reflecting His qualities of overlordship, paternalism, etc. Man has a natural inclination to hold these dear to his heart no matter whether he ever needs them for meeting his personal requirements or not. Similarly, man wants to have slaves, who would be under his domination, or to force even free people to accept his predominance, so that he may command their homage and services. It is not necessary that he should always win over their hearts because domination by force is more often as much effective as winning over the heart of a man It is, therefore, natural that man sometimes desires to attain predominance through brute force because it expresses his authority over others—an attribute of perfection to which man is predisposed.

"The most precious of all earthly possessions, then, falling under the second category, is the domination and winning over the hearts of men The perfection of domination lies in the authority exercised by a man over the hearts of others who are ever willing to comply with his bidding The hearts of men can best be dominated by creating love and reverence which is born out of a conviction about the perfection of qualities in the person adored, for, perfection of qualities is a divine attribute to which man has an inherent inclination The heart of man, therefore, desires to attain perfection either through knowledge or authority Riches and *Jāh*, being the two potent means of acquiring this authority, are cherished by the heart of man. And, since knowledge and authority are limitless, man endeavours to gain knowledge of everything and command authority over every existence As the Prophet has alluded to the dissatisfaction of the learned and the wealthy—the desire of man for domination over things beyond his authority—ever goes on increasing "[1]

1 Abbreviated from *Ihyā'*, Vol III, pp 241-244

Critique of the Self :

The most effective part of the *Ihyā'* is where al-Ghazali expounds the significance of purifying one's own soul and reforming the morals for achieving blessedness His exposition covers the fleeting nature of the terrestrial world, eternity of the world-to-come, significance of the faith and righteous action, cleansing of the spirit and eradication of the vices of heart which he deems to be the inner bases of all grossness in human conduct. The graphic description of the vices and virtues by al-Ghazali and his exhortation for adoption of the course leading to salvation bear the mark of an eloquent speaker, a prudent mentor and a philosopher with an incisiveness of intellect and a penetrating insight into the inner recesses of human soul, mind and spirit He is fully aware of the different types of human weaknesses and delineates each of these, sets forth their causes and traces their origin, and thereafter proceeds to suggest measures for subjugation of the earthly appetites and impulses out of which these vices are born The treatment of the ethical issues by al-Ghazali does not produce a mere religious discourse His essays are inspiring, employing a rich and expressive language which has since cast its spell over hundreds and thousands of people and reformed their lives The fourth section of the book deals explicitly with the critique of the Self and the method of self-examination He tells us how one should make an assessment of one's own vices and inclinations towards it, and prepare oneself for the life-to-come Under the caption "Self-criticism" al-Ghazali writes

> "O' *Nafs* (Self), is it the right course that when a Jew tells thee that a certain thing is injurious for thy health, thou dost not take it and preferest to curb thy desire, but, thou. completely disregardest the commands of Divine revelation and the directives of the prophets whose truthfulness is established by miracles ? Is it not surprising that thou attachest more weight to the opinion of that Jew although he is liable to form an erroneous opinion on account of his limited knowledge or wisdom ? Thou throwest away thy garment without the slightest hesitation,

if even a child informs thee that a scorpion has got into thy clothes. Is it that the tidings of the prophets, scholars, saints and the mentors about the life-to-come, the Hell and its blazing fire, its torments, its bitter thorn, its scorpions and reptiles do not deserve even as much credence as the information given by a child? Or, is it that the reptiles of the Hell shall cause thee lesser pain than the sting of an earthly scorpion which gives thee trouble for a day or even for a shorter period? This is certainly, not the way dictated by prudence If the beasts were to know of thy foolishness, they would laugh at thee.

"O' *Nafs*, thou knowest what is to happen after death and hast also a faith in the life-to-come, but thou still dost not want to act righteously and desirest to ignore the Hereafter. Death is marking time to come upon thee and impound thy soul without any warning Even if a hundred years were given, one shall never reach the destination, if one discontinues the journey to bask in the sunshine. And, what dost thou think of a man who goes abroad for acquiring knowledge but continues to postpone his studies in the hope that he would learn everything within the last few months before returning home? Thou wouldst, undoubtedly, laugh at this man since he hopes to acquire all knowledge and wisdom in such a short time, as also on a man who cherishes a desire to be appointed as a jurist without studying law. If thou hast presumed that the endeavours made during the old age are more fruitful, then, how dost thou think that this is not the last day of thy life? Why dost thou not then address thyself to the task just now? Has God told thee that He would allow thee some more time to make preparations for thy salvation? If not, then what is it that is preventing thee from making haste and prompting thee to postpone thy decision indefinitely? There is no other reason save that thou art finding it difficult to subjugate thy impulses and earthly desires, for that would involve an effort on thy part Dost

thou, then, wait for that day when it would be made easier for every man to conquer his desires? Verily, such a day shall never come since God has not created it at all The Paradise being surrounded by things unpleasant and unwelcome, shall never be agreeable to the indolent self which always wants to postpone the day's work to the next day Dost thou know how many tomorrows have been turned into yesterdays would it not be even harder to accomplish tomorrow what cannot be done today? Take the instance of the passion for sex If it is not curbed today, it cannot be rooted out tomorrow, or else, it is like a tree which a man wants to uproot but being unsuccessful in his attempt, postpones the task for the future. This man knows it well that with the passage of time, the tree will take root more firmly while he will become older and grow weaker Obviously, this man would not be able to accomplish in his old age what he could not do in the prime of his youth. To put a bridle on the passions is really as difficult and troublesome as to train a wolf.

"O' *Nafs*, thou appearest not to know these facts of common experience but claimest to be wise and prudent! Verily, there appears to be none more foolish than thee! Thy passions, thou mightest plead, do not allow thee to be steadfast in virtue while the troubles and afflictions make thee abandon the path of patience. If this is correct, why dost thou not seek the pleasure that is everlasting, pure and sublime, and which can be had in the celestial Abode of Bliss alone. If thou art a slave of thy desires and mad after pleasure, it is even more desirable for thee to curb thy fleeting predilections, for sometimes one morsel taken by a man prevents him from taking his food for days together. Suppose a patient has been directed by his physician not to take cold water for three days so that he might recover from illness Now, tell me, what does thy intellect dictate? Should this man abstain from cold drink for three days to regain his health or, should he,

disregarding the result, satisfy his craving for cold water? Dost thou not know that the pitifully short duration of life vouchsafed to thee in this transient world is relatively even more short-lived, when compared to the eternal life in the Hereafter, than the three days of that patient as compared with the rest of his life? Is it that the endurance required for controlling the earthly passions is more agonising than the torments of indefinite duration in different portals of the Hell? How wouldst thou be able to put up with that everlasting torture when thou findest it so distasteful to bear this temporary unpleasantness?

"I find that thou art unable to restrain thyself just for two reasons. The first of these is a sort of concealed infidelity while the other is nothing but stupidity. Thy concealed infidelity comprises lack of conviction about the Day of Requital and recompense of thy deeds in the world-to-come Thy stupidity, on the other hand, makes thee oblivious of the designs of God and asks thee to depend upon His mercy disregardful of the fact that the benefits conferred on the obstinate sinners are really snares to trap them. Still, thou wouldst not trust His beneficence for a piece of bread or a handful of grains nor follow even the express commands enjoined by Him! The Prophet has said: *Prudent is he who resorts to self-criticism and endeavours to prepare for the life after death while stupid is he who allows his self to take after the ways of flesh and still remain hopeful of divine favour.* Alas, thou shouldst have been aware of the snare of thy passions and shouldst not have allowed thyself to be duped by the Satan. Thou hast been asked to take care of thyself and be charitable unto thee. Thou shouldst not waste the sojourn of thy life in this transient world. If thou losest a moment of this life, thou wilt lose a substantial portion of thy fortune in the Hereafter, which can never be regained. Therefore, take advantage of thy health before thou fallest ill, of the recess before thou art pre-occupied; of the riches before thy indigence; of the youthful zest

(the creation and the raising of) a single soul Lo! Allah is Hearer, Knower.[1]

As We began the first creation, We shall repeat it.[2]

As He brought you into being, so return ye (unto Him) [3] "[4]

Critics of the Ihyā':

Ibn Taymiyah's verdict on the *Ihyā'* is that on the whole it is a well-written book employing an elegant style[5] At the same time, Ibn Taymiyah criticises it for four reasons The first of these is that al-Ghazali's thought shows definite traces of Greek philosophy In delineating the Unity of God, prophethood and the final recompense al-Ghazali has, maintains Ibn Taymiyah, introduced numerous concepts which were held by the then philosophers Even if al-Ghazali opposed the philosophers, he gave scholasticism a philosophical foundation. Ibn Taymiyah being emphatically opposed to philosophy found some of the writings of al-Ghazali unplausible from a purely religious view-point

The second ground for criticism of the *Ihyā'* is that al-Ghazali employs a syllogism which is not fully in keeping with the spirit of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* The third reason given by Ibn Taymiyah is that the book contains many concepts and teachings of those treading the path of mysticism and their claims in regard to gaining insight into the divine truth Ibn Taymiyah disagrees with al-Ghazali in regard to the latter's views on mysticism. The fourth reason for disagreement of Ibn Taymiyah is that the *Ihyā'* contains many Traditions of doubtful authenticity.[6] Despite these shortcomings pointed out by him, Ibn Taymiyah writes about the *Ihyā'*:

> "Notwithstanding these defects, the *Ihyā'* contains the teachings of numerous illuminated mentors and mystics, and their experiences in regard to the purification of self

1 *Luqmān*, 28
2 *Al-Anbiya*, 104
3 *Al-A'raf*, 29
4 *Ihyā'* Vol IV, pp 356-358
5 *Fatāwah*, Vol II, p 194 ·
6 *Fatāwah* Vol II, p 194 and *At-Taj al-Makallal*, p 388

and the intuitive knowledge, which are identical with the canons of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* and can thus be acceptable from a theological point of view It is because of this reason that the scholars hold different opinions about the *Ihyā'* and all of them are not opposed to it "[1]

Ibn al-Jawzi has also criticised al-Ghazali for making use of unauthentic and weak Traditions He is of the opinion that this was because al-Ghazali was not a traditionist.[2] Hafiz Zain ud-din al-'Iraqi later collected all the Traditions mentioned in the *Ihyā'* and classified these according to the accepted norms and examined the authenticity or otherwise of each Tradition. Ibn al-Jawzi has also pointed out certain mistakes made by al-Ghazali in regard to the historical events mentioned by him in the *Ihyā'* Al-Ghazali was, however, not a scholar of history or Traditions.[3]

Ibn al-Jawzi maintains that al-Ghazali has mentioned several examples of mystics or the methods resorted to by them for penance and self-purification which cannot be held permissible under the *Shari'ah*, much less to be recommended for being followed by the people.[4] Ibn al-Jawzi, however, acknowledges the effectiveness of the *Ihyā'* and the valuable contribution it has made to the subsequent Islamic thought. He has also summarised the *Ihyā'* in a book entitled *Minhāj ul-Qāsidin* (Path of the Truth-seekers) in which he has deleted the portions objectionable from his point of view This work of Ibn al-Jawzi, however, lacks the inspiration and effectiveness so characteristic of the *Ihyā'*

Al-Ghazali and Dialectics :

A man of al-Ghazali's outstanding intellectual gifts could not continue to tread the beaten path of earlier dialecticians nor could he be content with the position of a mere commentator. Unfortunately, the science of dialectics, which had been evolved for the defence of religion and which had to keep itself abreast

1 *Fatāwah*, Vol II, p 194
2 *Al-Muntazam*, Vol IX, pp 169-170
3 *Ibid* , Vol IX, p 170
4 *Ibid* , Vol IX, p 169

with the current developments in other branches of learning, had lost its vigour by the end of the fourth century The Ashᶜarites of the time had taken to the path of rigid dogmatism insisting on the acceptance of not simply their tenets and beliefs but also the canons devised by al-Ashᶜari and Abū-Bakr Baqillāni without the shghtest modification or improvement They considered it heretical to employ a logical syllogism not used by the earlier teachers of their school for the defence of religion Al-Ghazali pressed his knowledge of philosophy for upholding the religious beliefs and dogmas and, indeed, devised entirely new canons for rational exposition of these matters which were more effective than the arguments of the Ashᶜarites In regard to the matters like divine attributes, prophethood, miracles, religious practices, punishments and rewards in the Hereafter, and the Day of Requital he brought forth entirely new arguments, more convincing to a rational mind, than those employed by his predecessors He did, in fact, lay the foundations of a scientific scholastic system, thus infusing a new blood in the old Ashᶜarite school The modified doctrines of the Ashᶜarite school eventually became, thanks to al-Ghazali, the most popular system of scholasticism in the entire Islamic world, but, since al-Ghazah held divergent views from al-Ashᶜari and other eminent scholars of that school on several issues, many ardent followers of the Ashᶜarite school looked down upon al-Ghazali's thought with misgivings and disfavour Some of the Ashᶜarite zealots even accused al-Ghazali of breaking away from the orthodox faith and adopting heretical tenets After the compilation of the *Ihyā'*, the Ashᶜarite scholars became so critical of al-Ghazali that one of his friends wrote a letter to invite his attention towards the matter Al-Ghazali explained the position in some detail in a booklet with the title *Faisal at-Tafarraqa Bain al-Islam wal-Zandaqa* He writes in it

> "Dear brother, a group of people envious of me is busy in censuring my writings, for, in their opinion I have expounded views contrary to those held by the teachers of the old, or the founders of the scholastic school They think that even the slightest deviation from the orthodox Ashᶜarite

Personal experience and a comprehensive insight into the speculative as well as religious sciences led al-Ghazali to the conclusion that scholasticism has only a limited utility which may sometimes be even harmful in particular cases He ultimately came to regard dialectics as a medicine which should not be administered to the healthy people who needed only adequate nourishment through their food. And, this could be provided amply by the Qur'ān. He maintained that the Qur'ān contained a superior logic as its arguments are quite satisfying to the people possessing common-sense. In his last book entitled *Iljām ul-ʿAwām ʿan-ʿIlm il-kalām* (The Restraining of the commonalty from the Science of Dialectics) al-Ghazali observes .

> "The Qur'ānic arguments are like food which provide nourishment to everyone while the logical system built up by the dialecticians is similar to a medicine which can be administered profitably to a few only, and may even have harmful effects for others not requiring it Or, else, the Qur'ānic reasoning resembles water which can be taken both by a weak child and a robust youth while dialectical argumentation is like a rich food which provides nourishment to the latter but is indigestible and even harmful for children "[1]

Continuing further on the evil effects of dialectics, he writes :

> "The indiscriminate practice of dialectics by its votaries provides an irrefutable argument against that science Since the time it was popularised, it has given rise to many evils which were not to be found during the times of the Prophet's companions."[2]

Al-Ghazali's refusal to return to Baghdad :

Al-Ghazali was prevailed upon by Fakhr ul-Mulk, the son of Nizām ul-Mulk, who had become a Vazier of the Saljuq Prince Sanjar, to return to Nishapur in the month of Zul-qʿadah, 499 A.H.,

1 *Iljām ul-ʿAwām*, p 20
2 *Ibid*

and resume the chief professorship at the Nizāmiah University. Fakhr ul-Mulk was assassinated in the beginning of 500 A H by a Batinite emissary and al-Ghazali abandoned the profession of teaching shortly thereafter He returned to his native town Tūs, and founded a small institution for the teaching of his local disciples and the cultivation of a religious life

The then Saljuq Sultan appointed Ahmad, the elder son of Nizām ul-Mulk, as his Vazier in 500 A H , who again made a request to al-Ghazali to resume his post at the Nizāmiah University, Baghdad, which had only been provisionally filled in As a matter of fact, there was nobody in the entire world of Islam who could replace al-Ghazali The Nizāmiah University at Baghdad was the premier institution of those days and occupied a pride of place in the educational and religious academics of the ʿAbbāsids Everyone felt the loss suffered by the Nizāmiah on account of al-Ghazali's retirement and was anxious for his return to teaching in Baghdad Qwām ud-din Nizām ul-Mulk, who was the Grand Vazier of the Saljuq King wrote a personal letter to al-Ghazali expressing the desire of the then ʿAbbāsid Caliph that he should return to Baghdad In this letter he wrote

> "I solicited the orders of the Caliph in this matter but these were not granted until Sadr ud-din[1] took it upon himself that the wishes of the Caliph shall be communicated by him personally to *Khwaja-i'-Ajal, Zain ud-din, Hujjat-ul-Islam, Farid uz-zamān,*[2] Abū Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali, who is peerless and up to whom everyone looks for guidance "[3]

In order to impress that all the courtiers and the chiefs of the Caliphate were anxiously awaiting the return of al-Ghazali, all the high officials of the Caliph's court signed the letter In yet another letter Ahmad wrote to al-Ghazali "Although scholars

1 Sadar ud-din Muhammad the grandson of a Nizām ul-Mulk, was Vazier of the Saljuq Prince Sanjar, in whose dominion lay Tūs the native town of al-Ghazali

2 Titles conferred on al-Ghazal

3 *Al-Ghazali*, p 27

would go to the place whereupon you happen to be present for acquiring knowledge from you, it appears reasonable that you should choose for your residence a place which is not only the metropolis of the Islamic world but is also easily accessible from all parts of the empire And such a place is obviously Baghdad."

In reply to the royal edicts and the letters from his well-wishers al-Ghazali sent a lengthy reply giving the reasons for not returning to his teaching profession in Baghdad. He pleaded that one and a half hundred students who were receiving education under him in Tūs, would find it extremely difficult to go all the way to Baghdad with him His family which was not with him earlier in Baghdad would have to face unnecessary hardship if he again migrated from Tūs He also said that in Baghdad it would not be possible for him to remain unconcerned with the polemics and debates which had become the prevailing taste of the court life, while he had taken a vow at the *Muqām-i-Ibrahim* that he would never enter into such futile controversies Other reasons given by al-Ghazali were that he did not like to visit the Caliph nor accept any remuneration from the Caliphate, but it would be difficult for him to do without either of these in Baghdad as he did not possess any landed property in the capital which could support his family The ʿAbbāsid Caliph as well as the Saljuq King tried their best to persuade al-Ghazali to return to Baghdad but he refused to comply with their requests [1]

Death of al-Ghazali :

Al-Ghazali spent the rest of his life in further studies like a student He had not been able to pay as much attention to the Traditions as he had to the religious and secular sciences He, therefore, tried to make up the leeway by studying the *Sahīh* of *Bukhārī* and *Muslim*[2] under a reputed traditionist of the time, Hafiz ʿAmr ibn Abi al-Hasan al-Rawāsi. He even obtained the diploma of having studied the two books under al-Rawāsi As the

1 *Al-Ghazali*, p 27

2 The two authentic collections of the Traditions

annalists report, he spent most of his time during this period in the study of the Traditions One of his biographers, Ibn 'Asakir records

> "During the last days of his life, al-Ghazali addressed himself whole-heartedly to the study of the Traditions During this period he preferred the company of religious scholars, and studied the *Sahih* of *Bukhari* and *Muslim*, which are deemed to be the most authentic collections of the *Sunnah* "[1]

Al-Ghazali wrote another book on legal theory, known as *al-Mustasfa*, just a year or so before his death This work of al-Ghazali is still considered as one of the three outstanding contributions on the subject; the other two being *al-Mu'tamad* of Abul Husain al-Basri and *al-Burhan* of Imam-ul-Haramayn

Al-Ghazali died at Tabran on the 14th of Jamadi al-Ukhra, 505 A H at the age of 55 years Ibn al-Jawazi has given a graphic description of al-Ghazali's death, as told by Ahmad al-Ghazali who was an eye-witness of his brother's remarkable death

> "It was Monday He got up in the morning, made his ablutions and performed the dawn prayers, he then asked to bring his shroud, taking it he kissed and laid it on his eyes with the words, 'I submit to the command of my Master', then he stretched out his feet, facing the *Qibla* (the direction of K'aba) When people saw him he had already passed away."[2]

Two Outstanding Qualities of al-Ghazali:

Immaculate sincerity and indomitable courage are the two most impressive qualities of al-Ghazali which have been acknowledged by all—friends as well as his foes His writings breathe an almost tragic urgency of his message. Ibn Taymiyah differs from al-Ghazali on many issues but he has absolutely no doubt

1 *Tabyeen*, p 296

2 *Ithaf us-Sa'ada*, Vol I, p 11

about the sincerity of al-Ghazali's purpose [1] The reason behind effectiveness as well as immense popularity gained by al-Ghazali's works was his earnestness and selfless devotion for the Truth which made him abandon the most coveted post at the Nizāmiah University, led him to spend a decade in seclusion and contemplation and, finally, gave him the courage to turn down the invitations of emperors and resist the temptations of riches, honour and glory He has written that the evil which gets out last from the heart of a righteous man is the love of honour. Al-Ghazali's life before his demise bears testimony to the fact that he had attained this stage of self-purification and moral rectitude.

Al-Ghazali was fired with an adventurous spirit and a lofty idealism which enabled him to set his heart upon an ever higher objective His work on jurisprudence and theory of law was a beacon of light for the scholar-jurists for many centuries to come. Contrary to the pattern of education followed in al-Ghazali's time, he studied secular sciences after acquiring mastery over religious learning. He engaged himself in the intensive study of philosophy and other speculative sciences of the times and soon acquired such a proficiency in these subjects that he was able to challenge the competence of reason which could not be adequately met by the philosophers for one hundred years.

In making a personal search for the truth his efforts were in no way meaner than his accomplishments in the field of intellect. He turned to the path of mysticism for purification of self and gaining spiritual strength under a reputed spiritual mentor of the time, Sheikh Abū ʿAli al-Fārmadi (d. 477 A. H.). He abandoned everything he had, spent a decade in solitude and contemplation and was favoured with illumination and beatific visions.

Al-Ghazali's endeavours for the revival and revivification of Islam were not limited to the reformation of the Muslim society alone Shibli Naʿomāni has given an account of the efforts made by him to establish a truly Islamic state in Spain He says:

"Al-Ghazali was not satisfied with the then existing

[1] *Fatāwā*, Vol II, p 194

Muslim states which had degenerated into secular governments He held the view that unless a new State was established in accordance with the Islamic principles of polity, the Muslim society could not be Islamised. He could not, however, spare time for this stupendous task from his pre-occupations of contemplation and penance, purification of self and rectitude of morals. However, after the *Ihyā'* *ʿUlūm id-Din* was brought to light and its copies were taken to Spain in 501 A.H , the then king, ʿAli ibn Yūsuf ibn Tāshfin, ordered to burn them [1] Al-Ghazah sadly learnt of the incident but shortly thereafter a young man, Muhammad ibn ʿAbdullah ibn Tūmart by name, arrived from Spain to study under him. Muhammad[2] came of a distinguished family, reputed for its long record of eminent warriors While he was studying under al-Ghazali he had made up his mind, either of his own account, or, most probably, under the influence exerted by

1 *Ithāf us-Saʿāda*, Vol 1, p 10

2 Ibn Subki has given some interesting details about Muhammad in *Tabqāt us-Shafeʿiyah* He says that Muhammad ibn ʿAbdullah belonged to Western Africa In his youth he first studied locally and then travelled in the East to study jurisprudence and dialectics Noted for his simplicity, he strictly followed the dictates of the *Shariʿah* Returning to Egypt after completing his education, he began preaching to the people to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong However, he earned the hostility of the local population owing to his uncompromising attitude and was eventually turned out of the place He then returned to his native land *via* Alexandria He arrived in Mehdiah in 505 A H and commenced to preach reform among the Berber tribes He went to Bajayah and then to Morroco on his errand, where he came into conflict with the members of the royal family ʿAli ibn Yūsuf Tāshfin summoned him to his court where he was asked to explain the reasons for criticising the King Undaunted by the pomp and glory of the royal court he replied, "Is not wine sold freely in this town ? Do not people misappropriate the income of the trusts meant for the orphan ?" The king was so impressed by his speech that he burst into tears Muhammad gradually gathered an enormous following round him and before long formed an extensive kingdom with the help of a Berber tribe Masāmdah (*Tabqāt al-Shafeʿiyah*, Vol IV, pp 71-74)

al-Ghazalı, to overthrow ʿAlı ıbn Yūsuf ın order to set up a truly Islamic State ın Spain Although al-Ghazalı agreed wıth hım, he asked Muhammad about the means as well as the help he hoped to muster ın hıs venture. Havıng satısfied hımself about the project, al-Ghazali allowed Muhammad to proceed wıth his undertaking In regard to al-Ghazalı's blessıngs for the enterprıse of Muhammad, Ibn Khaldūn says 'As people are generally aware, he (Muhammad) met al-Ghazali and consulted hım about hıs venture Al-Ghazali approved of hıs suggestion sınce Islam had grown weak ın the whole world and there was no kıng who could unite the entıre *Ummah* for upholdıng the cause of Islam However, al-Ghazali first enquired Muhammad about the means he had for organısıng the uprısıng and brıngıng ıt to a successful end'.

The kıngdom established by Muhammad ıbn 'Abdullah ıbn Tūmaıt, known as *al-Muwahidīn*, lasted for a pretty long time The reign of ʿAlı ıbn Yūsuf Tāshfın, which was notorious for ıts widespread tyranny, had given encouragement to the laxity of morals among all the classes of society Abduction and rape of women belonging to respectable families by the kıng's legionaries had become a common feature of the day The royal family, descendıng from a recently converted Berber tribe called *Mulassamīn*, followed a curious custom Their men always wore a veil while their women moved about unrestrained and unveiled Muhammad ıbn Tūmart, after achievıng power, dıd not hımself ascend the throne but chose a capable and learned young man by the name of ʿAbdul Momın who succeeded the last *Mulassamīn* kıng Tāshfın, son of ʿAlı ıbn Tāshfın ın 540 A H

ʿAbdul Momın and hıs descendants ruled over the empire of Morocco strictly ın accordance wıth the wishes of Muhammad ıbn Tūmart and al-Ghazalı Ibn Khaldūn has gıven an account of the rule by *al-Muwahidīn* ın these words 'Durıng their rule ʿ*Ulema* were held ın high esteem

and all the affairs of the State were decided in consultation with them Justice was made available to the weak and the poor, tyrannical officials were severely punished, ruffians were held in leash, mosques were constructed in royal palaces, the frontier posts were fortified and strengthened and fresh conquests were made' "[1]

Impact of al-Ghazali :

In intellectual and spiritual attainments, brilliance of his mind and the totality of knowledge he had mastered, there have been only a few personalities comparable to al-Ghazali His epoch-making writings were the harbinger of a vigorous intellectual movement and a source of inspiration to the subsequent generations Al-Ghazali did in fact left such a deep imprint on the pages of Islamic history that his impact on the subsequent Islamic thought has always been acknowledged both by his admirers and critics His writings are still held in high esteem and profitably studied by those who yearn for purification of the self and mystic communion with God.

Reformers after al-Ghazali :

Despite al-Ghazali's successful encounter with the scepticism of philosophers which had threatened an spiritual chaos in Islam, the moral and spiritual disintegration of the masses by the end of the fifth century had become so widespread that it required a popular movement for the regeneration of the simplicity and directness of the faith . What the *Millat* needed was an illuminated and inspired mentor who wielded influence among the populace, one who could hold them spell-bound and fill them with faith and enthusiasm, zeal and self-confidence The autocratic governments of the past four hundred years had had definitely a dissolving influence on the spiritual and moral life of the community These had produced a class which, although claiming to profess Islam, had the aggrandisement of the self,

1 *Al-Ghazali*, pp 210-213

acquisition of material success and pursuit of wealth, power and honour as its ultimate end. Iranian and Hellenestic cultural influences had, on the one hand, made inroads into the Muslim society while, on the other, paganism of the pre-Islamic *Jahiliyah*, was again reasserting itself. The ostentatious, conceited and dissolute manners of the elite, grandees and retinues of the emperors had became a model for the commonalty. Unmindful of the humble and poor who led a discontented and frustrated life, those who had the money to squander were busy in their own pursuits of pleasure. The affluent were gradually losing all the good qualities like humanity, generosity and benevolence while the poorer classes were incurring the loss of qualities like patience and contentment, confidence and self-respect Torn between a moral crisis, on the one hand, and social injustice, on the other, the Muslim society was threatened with disintegration What this critical situation demanded was an invigorating call inviting the people back to the faith, cutting asunder the pulls of worldly temptations and benefits, rekindling the desire for salvation and blessedness, achievement of the true knowledge of God and inculcating an ardent desire to submit oneself to His command. It was necessary for it that the true meaning of *Tawhid*, the Unity of God Almighty, along with an awareness of the fleeting nature of the earthly pleasures and the inefficacy of the power and riches were driven home to the people

The fifth century after *Hijrah*, on the other hand, also saw a diffusion of arts and sciences in the world of Islam. We find during this period some of the greatest intellectual leaders brought forth by Islam—Abū Is'haq Shīrāzi (d. 476 A H) and al-Ghazali (d 505 A. H.) in the field of religious sciences, Abul Wafā ibn ᶜAqeel (d 513 A. H) and ᶜAbdul Qāhir al-Jurjāni (d. 471 A. H.) in jurisprudence and literature, Abū Zakarya Tebrezi :(d 502 A H) in grammar and lexicography and Abul Qasim al-Harīrī (d. 516 A H) in literature Each one of these was a pioneer in his own field and every one of them remained unrivalled for centuries to come. During such a period of intellectual awakening no religious mentor could have hoped to achieve any success unless he was

himself well-versed in all the prevalent sciences It was essential that the person should be as much acclaimed for his literary distinction and brilliance of mind as for his moral and spiritual excellence This was, indeed, necessary if he was not to be brushed aside contemptuously by the learned and elites as an illiterate fanatic Thus, these were the qualities demanded of a man who could fill the hearts of the people with faith and knowledge, cure them of their scepticism, provide solace to the spiritually distressed and fire them with a burning desire for moral and spiritual uplift.

The Two Saints of Baghdad :

God Almighty brought forth two outstanding personages during this period who devoted their life for the religious and spiritual revivification of the Muslims These were ᶜAbdul Qādir Jilani and ᶜAbdur Rahmān ibn al-Jawzi The fields of their activities were different but both of them deeply impressed the life of the Muslims in their times It was also a blessing from God that both of them had Baghdad, the metropolis of the then Islamic world, as their centre, and were endowed with a long life to accomplish the task to which they had addressed themselves.

And, it is also a matter of pride for the Hanbalite school of jurisprudence that both of these luminaries belonged to that very school

CHAPTER VIII

SHEIKH ABDUL QADIR JILANI

ᶜAbdul Qādır was born ın Gılān[1] ın 470 A H. He was an Arab by descent, beıng the tenth descendent of Hasan ıbn ᶜAlı, but belonged to Iran by mıgratıon of hıs ancestors He came to Baghdad ın 488 A H at the age of 18 years It was perhaps not merely fortuıtous that he arrıved at Baghdad to acquıre educatıon almost at the same tıme when another reputed teacher, al-Ghazalı, was leavıng the cıty in search of truth[2] Although ınclıned to penance and cultıvatıon of religious observances from an early age, he addressed hımself whole-heartedly to acquire educatıon under the most reputed teachers of the tıme such as Abul Wafā Ibn ᶜAqeel, Muhammad ıbn Hasan al-Baqıllānı and Abū Zakariya Tebrezı. Thereafter, he turned to mysticısm and was guıded ın ıts tenets and practıces by Sheıkh Abul Khaır Hammād ıbn Muslım al-Dabbās[3] and Cadı Abū Saᶜeed Makhramı,[4] and was allowed by the latter to ınıtiate others in the mystic order of his mentor

1 Gılan or Jılan and also known as Vaılam, ıs a north-western provınce of Iran, south of the Caspıan Sea and north of the Elburz chaın It ıs bounded ın the east by Tabrıstan or Mazandran, and ıts northern lımıt ıs marked by the junctuıe of the Kuı and the Araxes , ıts polıtıcal boundary with Russıa ıs marked by Astara stream It ıs one of the most beautıful areas ın Iran (E I S Vol II, p 170)

2 *Ibn Kāthīr*, Vol XII, p 149

3 Sheᶜrānı writes that most of the mystics belonging to Baghdad were hıs disciples He died ın 525 A H (*Tabqāt ul-Kubra*, Vol I, p 134)

4 Hıs name was Mubarak ıbn ᶜAlı ibn Husaın As reported by Ibn Kathīı, he was a traditionist and mystic belonging to the school of Ahmad ıbn Hanbal He died ın 511 A H

Popular Enthusiasm :

After completing his education of religious sciences as well as the training in mystic disciplines, ʿAbdul Qādir began his career as a teacher in the seminary of his teacher Cadi Abū Saʿeed Makhrami In his sermons which were delivered in the premises of the same institution, there was soon such a rush of people that extensions had to be carried out in the building of the institution It appeared as if the whole of Baghdad assembled in his congregations At the same time, he claimed such an attention and deference from the people attending his lectures that even the kings would have envied it Sheikh Muwaffaq ud-din ibn Qudāmah, author of the *al-Mughni*, records that he had not seen a man more revered for his piety and religious learning than ʿAbdul Qādir The king, his chief and ministers attended his sermons along with the rank and file and used to sit in a corner without any fanfare. Scholars and jurists rubbed shoulders with the students. The enthusiastic devotion of the people coming to his lectures can be well imagined by the fact that often as many as 400 inkpots were counted, which were brought in to take down the notes of his sermons

Moral Excellence :

Notwithstanding the implicit reverence cherished for ʿAbdul Qādir by the people, he was always modest, humble and unpretentious He often left his work to attend to the needs of a child, a destitute or a slave girl Never evading the company of the poor he even washed their clothes or performed similar other personal services for them, yet he never stood up in the honour of any person of the rank or the elite [1] If the Caliph ever paid a visit to him, the chroniclers of his time report, he deliberately went inside his house so that he might not have to stand up to welcome the king [2] He used to come out of the house after the

1 *Tabqāt ul-Kubra*, Vol I, p 127
2 *Ibid*, Vol I, p 128

Calıph had seated hımself. ʿAbdul Qādır never paıd back the courtesy call to any vazier or the king.'

Those who have seen ʿAbdul Qādır have paıd a glowıng trıbute to hıs moral excellence and large-heartedness, modesty and hospıtalıty, generosıty and goodness of his heart. One of his contemporarıes who has had the opportunity of enjoying the company of ʿAbdul Qādır says that he had not seen a man more polıte, large-hearted and charıtable than Sheıkh ʿAbdul Qādır. Despıte hıs erudıtıon and emınence, he respected hıs elders, met the youngsters wıth a good grace, always saluted first, haıled the poor courteously wıth deference but never stood up to welcome the grandees or nobles, nor did he ever pay a vısıt to any mınıster or governor.[2]

Another contemporary of ʿAbdul Qādir, Hafiz Abū-ʿAbdullah Muhammad ıbn Yūsuf al-Barzālı reports ·

> "Hıs prayers were readıly answered Beıng extremely tender-hearted, he would burst into tears (if anythıng sorrowful or touchıng was mentıoned to him). More often he was to be found ımmersed ın medıtation and recollectıon of God. He was soft-hearted, courteous, cheerful, generous and compassıonate Bemg the offspring of a noble famıly, he was also hıghly reputed for hıs profound knowledge and pıety "[3]

The testımony of Muhı ud-dın Abū ʿAbdullah Muhammad ıbn Hāmıd al-Baghdādı, a jurıst-scholar of those tımes runs as follows

> "Always dısposed to avoıd thıngs unseemly and ındecorous, he only pressed for the desırable and befittıng He would boil wıth ındignatıon ıf the Dıvıne commandments were overstepped but remaıned listless to the wrongs and ıll-treatments to his own person He would never seek revenge save for the sake of God Almighty, nor, send back

1 *Tabqāt ul-Kubra*, Vol I, p 127.
2 *Ibıd* , Vol I, p 127
3 *Qalā'ıd al-Jawāhır*, p. 9.

a beggar without giving him something If he had nothing to give he would part with the clothes he had been putting on."[1]

ʿAbdul Qādir took pleasure in feeding the poor and spending freely to meet the needs of the destitutes Ibn al-Najjar reports that ʿAbdul Qādir often used to say "If I were given treasures of the whole world, I would spend it all on feeding the poor." Sometimes he said "It seems that I have a hole in my hands I cannot keep anything with me If I had a thousand *dinars*, I would spend every single shell before the daybreak"[2] He had given instructions to his servants that as many guests as possible should be invited for the dinner. During the dinner he always sat with the poor and lowly, chatted with his students or enquired about the welfare of those who did not happen to be present there His behaviour was so affectionate that everyone who met him gained the impression that ʿAbdul Qādir had the highest regard for him. He overlooked the faults of others and if anyone stated something on oath, he readily accepted his statement He never gave out the secrets of others nor stated anything before others that might put someone to shame.[3]

Reassurance to the Dejected :

The annalists of his time agree that quite a large number of miracles[4] were worked by ʿAbdul Qādir[5] Sheikh-ul-Islam ʿIzz ud-din ibn Abdul-Sālam and Ibn Taymiyah are of the view

1 *Qalāʾid al-Jawāhir*, p 9

2 *Ibid*, p 10

3 *Ibid*, p 9

4 Miracle stands both for *Muʿjizah* and *Karamāt* and denotes an act contrary to the usual course of nature However, the former (*Muʿjizah*) is a term used only for the miraculous acts caused by God to confound the adversaries of a prophet and to make them acknowledge the truth of prophethood *Karamāt*, on the other hand, is a wonder wrought by God through a saint or man of God for the good of the people as well as in proof of his sainthood Miracles worked by the saints are, however, of a lower order than those of a prophet

5 *Qalāʾid al-Jawāhir*, p 167 and *Jalaʾ ul-ʿAinaʾin*, p 130

that 'Abdul Qādir was a worker of incessant miracles but his miracle of miracles was filling the heart of the despaired and broken-hearted with faith, hope and enthusiasm. He infused a breath of new life, zeal and self-confidence into countless persons through his powers of speech and the spiritual power of his heart. He was, in truth, a blessing for the world of Islam for he renovated and revived the true content of the faith and tapped the sources of moral and spiritual strength for a religious renaissance[1] Sheikh 'Amr al-Kaisāni reports that there was hardly a sermon delivered by 'Abdul Qādir after which a number of Jews and Christians did not embrace Islam, marauders and robbers did not repent for their sins and heretics and apostates did not renounce their mistaken beliefs.[2]

Al-Jubbā'i relates that 'Abdul Qādir once told him that he wished to lead the life of a recluse in the wilderness but God had willed that people should derive benefit from him. And, it was a blessing granted unto him that more than five thousand Jews and Christians embraced Islam and about a hundred thousand sinners and criminals repented for their misdeeds on account of him[3]

Teaching and Missionary Activities:

Gifted with divine grace and illumination, 'Abdul Qādir was ever conscious of the purification of spirit and rectitude of morals, yet he did not lose sight of the importance of teaching and disseminating the correct doctrines of the faith Being a follower of the Hanbalite school of *Sunni* theology, he endeavoured, like his mentor, to root out innovations and deviations from the orthodox faith and practice. Because of his forceful defence of the strict orthodoxy, reports Ibn al-Sam'āni, the traditionist and their followers came to be held in high esteem by the masses

'Abdul Qādir used to take daily a class each of the Qur'ānic

1 *Qalā'id al-Jawāhir*, p 8
2 *Ibid*, p 8
3 *Ibid*, p 8

exegesis, Traditions and Jurisprudence in which he also explained the differences between various juristic schools of Islam The classes were held in the morning and evening, while ʿAbdul Qādir listened to the recitation of the Qur'ān after the mid-day prayers and thereafter dictated *fatwās* on religious or legal questions referred to him. In formulating his answers ʿAbdul Qādir generally followed the Shafeʿite and Hanbalite schools of jurisprudence His juristic-opinions were highly praised by the jurist-scholars of Iraq for these provided a striking example of the acuteness of his intellect [1]

Once the question referred to him was that a man had taken an oath that he would perform a religious observance in a manner that nobody else in the whole world would be able to share the privilege with him but, if he failed to fulfil his undertaking, this would mean an irrevocable separation between him and his wife The scholars were astounded by the strange oath taken by the man and could not suggest an observance which could be performed by him alone in the whole world. ʿAbdul Qādir, however, replied that the man should be allowed to circumambulate Kʿāba alone seven times to perform the lesser *hajj* Everyone agreed that this was the only authorised religious observance which he could perform alone at a time when no body else would be engaged in the same prayer [2]

Certitude of Knowledge:

Profound knowledge of the religious lore and meticulous observance of the Traditions of the Holy Prophet, aided by the grace of God, had unveiled the mysteries of celestial world to ʿAbdul Qādir, who had reached the stage where discrimination between truth and untruth, divine intuition and demoniacal imposition is born in a man He had acquired the certitude of knowledge that the *Shariʿah* of the Last Prophet was perfect and

1 *Tabqāt ul-Kubra*, Vol I, p 126.
2 *Ibid*, p 126.

unchangeable, and that any claim made contrary to the divine edict was simply a satanic suggestion ʿAbdul Qādir himself relates an incident that he once came across He says

"Once I saw a dazzling light which filled the entire sky. Then a human frame appeared therein and said, 'O ʿAbdul Qādir, I am Lord, thy God I have made everything prohibited lawful unto thee' I replied, 'Get away from me, O Devil' As soon as I uttered these words, the lustre in the sky turned into darkness and the human frame began to fizzle out into smoke Then I heard someone saying, 'ʿAbdul Qādir, I had misled seventy mystics with this device, but God saved thee on account of thy knowledge and piety' To this I rejoined, 'No It was simply a grace of God' After ʿAbdul Qādir had related the incident someone asked, 'How did you know that it was the Satan' 'Since he told me', replied ʿAbdul Qādir, 'that he had made the things prohibited lawful for me'"[1]

He used to tell his disciples that if any action transgresses the commandments of God, then it is surely an imposition by the Satan In such cases one should return to the tenets of the *Sharīʿah*, inculcate an unflinching faith, and firmly reject the temptations of self-indulgence, for, whatever is not permitted by the *Sharīʿah* is decidely misleading [2]

Trust in God :

The unfailing and penetrating vision into the *Tawhīd* or Unity of God had conferred upon ʿAbdul Qādir that sublime piety which produces an absolute resignation in the will of God He explains the state of resignation in these words

"When a man finds himself in a trouble, the first endeavours to get rid of it If he fails, he seeks the help of others, such as, kings, officials, grandees or the rich, or,

1 *Tabqāt ul-Kubra*, Vol I, p 127
2 *Ibid*, Vol I, p 127

physicians in the case of an illness When this effort also fails him, he turns to God with invocations and praises, and not unoften with tears and lamentations *In other* words, he does not look for the assistance of others so long as he can obtain the requisite help from his own self, similarly, he does not implore God if he can get the help from His creatures; and, finally, when he does not get any help from that source too, he surrenders completely to God Almighty It is only at this stage that man seeks the help of God with prayers and invocations, lamentations and tears but God does not accept his entreaties till he gets tired of these too. Then, being completely dejected and broken-hearted, he is permeated by an illumination of spirit which makes him indifferent to the causes and effects Now he has a sublimated soul, unconscious of everything save the Divine Being and aware of the true content of *Tawhid* (Unity); he has now a certitude of knowledge that save God nothing has any power to do or undo a thing, to Him belongs the power to move a thing or keep it stationery, to promote or debase, to benefit or harm, to give life or bring death, to give honour or indignity, or to make affluent or indigent The man is now like a ball in the hands of a player, or a child in the lap of a nurse, or else a corpse in the hands of those who bathe it; for, these are completely at the mercy of those who possess them Likewise, the man thus loses his identity in the will of his Master, immersed in his higher-self he has no comprehension of anything save the acts of his Lord, nor does he witness or hear or think anything else If he seeks anything, it is the craftsmanship of the Supreme Creator, if he hears, it is His voice, if he comprehends, it is by the knowledge vouchsafed by Him, and if he is enlivened, it is only by His nearness Thus, in the state of total absorption, he gets peace only through the grace and blessings of God, he detests to depend on anything save his Lord, he surrenders himself completely before the will of God, acquires the

knowledge of mystries hidden from the senses through intuition and illumination of heart; and overflows with the gratitude of the Lord for His countless blessings."[1]

Love of Humanity :

The love of humanity, in general, and the affection for the *Ummah*, m particular, was symptomatic of ᶜAbdul Qādir's sublimated soul and indicative of his close affinity to the successors of the Prophet. In one of his sermons he delineated the object and the mental states of different types of persons visiting a market. Coming to the last category, he perhaps describes his own feelings in these words:

> "And there is the fifth man whose heart is filled, when he enters a market, with the awe and reverence of the Almighty to seek His blessings for those present in the market He becomes oblivious of everything else save his benediction for the people; he remains immersed, from the time of his entry into the market till he comes out of it, in the solemn invocation of divine blessings and in repenting for the sins of those who happen to be there, and thus he hardly gets any time to see what they are selling or buying. His heart bleeds and eyes shed tears over the ingratitude of man while his tongue remains busy in thanking God over what He has bestowed unto his bondsmen."[2]

The Times of ᶜAbdul Qādir :

ᶜAbdul Qādir spent 73 years of his life, in Baghdad When he came to Baghdad, Caliph Mustazhir b'Illāh Abul ᶜAbbās (487-512 A. H) was the reigning monarch after whom four other ᶜAbbāsid Calıphs, al-Mustarshid b'Illāh (512-529 A. H), al-Rāshid b'Illāh (deposed 529 A H), al-Muqtafi l' Amr Illāh (530-555 A H) and al-Mustanjid b'Illāh (555-565 A H) succeeded to the throne one after another.

1 *Futūh ul-Ghaib*, (Lecture No 3), pp 11-13
2 *Ibid* , (Lecture No 72), p 175

This was one of the most troublous times of the ʿAbbāsid rule when the Caliphs and Saljukid Kings vied with each other for maintaining their supremacy. The former being shorn of their temporal power were prevailed upon, sometimes with their permission but not unoften through coercion, by the Saljukid Kings to accept their domination. This also sometimes engulfed the Islamic world into fratricidal conflicts in which the Muslims shed the blood of one another

Several such incidents took place during the reign of Caliph al-Mustarshid He was a brave and wise administrator who won numerous battles but he was finally defeated by the Saljukid King Masʿūd in 529 A H Ibn Kathīr, giving an account of the Caliph's defeat writes

> "The Sultan (Masʿūd) gained victory and the Caliph (al-Mustarshid) was taken prisoner Baghdad was ransaked which plunged the city into sorrow The people dismantled the pulpits of the mosques, gave up attending congregational prayers and women came out lamenting for the Caliph and other captives The people in other parts of the country followed suit with the result that Malik Sanjar had to ask his nephew to reinstate the Caliph Masʿūd acted on the advice of his uncle but the Caliph was assassinated by the emissaries of the Batinites while he was on his way back to Baghdad "[1]

These heart-rending incidents were witnessed by ʿAbdul Qādir He saw the Muslims engaged in internal strife and bloodshed The ghastliness of these feuds and forays, the cruelty, savagery and treachery of those who engaged in them, and the miseries they inflicted upon their foes for the transitory pleasures of power, position and riches made him extremely sad It is true that he had nothing to do with these struggles for power, he was, nevertheless, alive to the miseries inflicted on the people and evil effects of the unsettled conditions during his times Through his sermons, therefore, he endeavoured, with the seriousness of purpose

1 Ibn Kathīr, Vol. XII, pp 207-208

and ardent zeal characteristic of him, to give a call for moral propriety and rectitude of the self he vividly explained the transitory nature of the world and its fleeting pleasures, the need for coveting the eternal bliss and preparing for the life-to-come, and the importance of evoking faith and correct mental attitude consisting of right conduct in speech, livelihood and ethical behaviour.

Sermons of ʿAbdul Qādir :

The discourses of ʿAbdul Qādir had a magnetic effect which is still discernible in them ʿAbdul Qādir is at his best in *Futūh ul-Ghaib* and *al-Fatah al-Rabbāni* In describing the love and unity of the Divine Being he appears to be inspired by higher sources The reader can still find the spirit of sincerity and enthusiasm running through these sermons

Following in the footsteps of the Prophet, his successors and the illuminated saints of the old, ʿAbdul Qādir touched on the current problems of his days, analysed the reasons for the miseries and maladies of the people and provided answers to their doubts and deficiencies Along with this, the tremendous sincerity and earnest zeal for the welfare of the people fired his haranguing with a frenzy of enthusiasm and magnetic effect capable of pulling the strings of the heart

Unity of the Divine Being :

The forces of worldliness had become so strong during ʿAbdul Qādir's time that the entire social and economic life of the community appeared to be woven into the context of political situation then obtaining, people had developed a tendency of depending upon the kings and nobles for realisation of their worldly ends and had begun to treat them as ultimate dispensers of benefits and harms In order to counteract this mistaken tendency of the people, he says in one of his sermons

> "This entire creation is like a man who has been imprisoned and chained by a king whose dominions are vast and countenance awesome The prisoner has been

hanged from a pine tree beneath which overflows a river, wide and deep The king is seated on an elevated chair, having arrows and bows, javelins and spears by his side He hits the captive with whatever weapon he desires Now, would it be prudent for anyone witnessing the scene to divert his attention from the king and expect harm or favour from the captive instead of the king? Would not such a man be deemed a fool or even mad? Oh God, I seek thy refuge from blindness after having being given eyes, from being cast off after getting near Thee, from regression after being promoted to Thy favour, from being misled after obtaining Thy guidance and from apostasy after having been granted faith "[1]

In another sermon he asks to instil the love of God to the exclusion of everything else besides Him.

"Keep your eyes fixed on Him who is looking at you, keep yourself before One who keeps Himself before you, love Him who loves you; hark unto Him who calls you, seek help from Him who can save you, take you out of the darkness of ignorance, cleanse you of the impurity of your soul, and redeem you from the baser-self and misleading temptations, despair and timidity. Your earthly desires are like your foolish friends who keep you off the righteous path and deprive you of the things, pleasing and desirable How long would you remain slaves of your desires, temptations, greed, pride, in short, this transitory world? How long would you remain forgetful of the Hereafter and of your Creator, the Fashioner of everything, the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden; everything is couched within His grasp from which emanates the love within your heart, the peace and solace, blessings and favours"[2]

Again, he throws light on the same topic in another lecture

"The entire creation is helpless Nothing can do good

1 *Futūh ul-Ghaib*, (Lecture No 17), p 49

2 *Ibid*, (Lecture No 62) p 157

or harm to you. It is only God who lets a thing be done by you, or, in other words, the will of God finds expression through you or somebody else. God has already destined whatever is to happen to you; whether it be beneficial or harmful, and, the destiny cannot be changed Those who are faithful and virtuous set an example unto other creations There are a few among these who have so purified their heart that their interior and exterior selves have become one, even if they have riches, their desires never seethe with the worldly attachments Verily, only those are courageous, valiant and powerful who have purified their hearts and attained this stage of illumination Unto these alone belongs the kingdom of Heaven and Earth for they have cleansed their heart of everything save God; they are like a soldier who guards the door of his heart, with the sabre of *Tawhid* (Unity) and the *Shari'ah* in his hand, to bar the entry of all creations to a place reserved for the Creator. Since they have attuned their hearts to the ultimate source of power, the *Shari'ah* beautifies their exterior while *Tawhid* and the wisdom of God's knowledge decorate their interior."[1]

Explaining what is meant by the false objects of worship, he says

"You put your trust in your own self, in others, in your wealth, in your rites and customs, in your trade and business, or in your rulers; but, in whatever object you place your reliance, it becomes, to say the truth, your object of worship. If you fear someone, or expect harm or favour from him or else deem him as an intercessor with God, then he is the object of worship for you "[2]

On another occasion, 'Abdul Qādir vividly described the jealousy and pride of God and His abhorrence of all associates, as

1 *Fatah al-Rabbāni*, (Lecture No 13), p 89
2 *Ibid* (Lecture No 20), p. 137

also the wisdom lying behind the loss of the things adored and loved by man

"You often complain, as you would ever do, that you have to suffer the loss of whatever you set your affections on The object of your fancy, if it is a human being, either separates or dies If it is wealth that you care for, you incur losses or are deprived of it Then, should I tell you, that God is in love with you, and He is jealous too[1] He has created you for Himself but you want to be enraptured by others[1] Have you not heard what God has said. *He holds them dear who love Him*, and also, *I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me*[1] And, are you not aware of what the Prophet once said *When God loves anyone, He places him in trouble but if he puts up with it with endurance and forbearance, God then sets him apart for Himself* Requested to elucidate what he meant by 'setting apart of a man', the Prophet replied *God deprives him of his possessions and progeny* This is so because it is natural for a man to love his offsprings and possessions and thus his love which should have been for God alone is divided between the Creator and the created, between the Eternal and the finite

"God is, however, extremely Proud and Mighty and therefore He destroys whatever threatens to become an associate in the love for Him It is only then that the heart of the man whom He loves gets attuned to Him And, then, this man can claim to enjoy the distinction of what has been described thus by God *He holds them dear who love Him* It is the stage when the heart of the man is cleansed of all idols and associates (of God) such as the offsprings, riches, pleasures and desires It has now no yearnings, no longings left—worldly or otherwise, not even those relating to piety and miraculous powers, stations and states, nearness and remoteness, the heart becomes a bottomless vessel in

1 *Adh-Dhariyat*, 56

which nothing can be kept God Almighty being extremely Proud and Jealous makes the heart of His beloved incapable of nourishing any other desire, He shrouds the heart of His devotee with His awe and a gasp of admiration, and guards it with His Glory and Might so that nothing can get inside this heart, nor can the possessions and riches, family and progeny, friends and relations, piety and miraculous powers do any harm to it None of these finds a place in the heart of such a man nor, then, God remains, jealous of them Whatever is granted thereafter to this man is a gift or reward from his God so that he may be of help to those who are around him or visit him "[1]

Refuge of the Broken-hearted :

The Muslim society in the time of ʿAbdul Qādir could broadly be divided into two classes The first of these comprised the men of substance who were deficient in faith and virtuous behaviour As against this, there was another class, poverty-stricken and down-trodden, but endowed with faith and a spirit of righteousness, moral strength and uprightness Thes people, sometimes, feeling disconcerted and broken-hearted, viewed the affluent with jealousy and mistrust, and regarded themselves as deprived and discarded ʿAbdul Qādir holds out hope and cheer to these people in one of his sermons He says

> " O ' empty-handed beggarly fellows, the world would appear to be at logger-heads with you, you are barefooted, unclothed and unfed, broken-hearted and ill-starred, evicted hom every place and deprived of your longings and fancies But do not say that God has reduced you to poverty, turned the world against you, abandoned, maligned or persecuted you, did not assign the portion of earthly pleasures due to you, or did not bestow honour and fame upon you Nor is it proper for you to complain that God has granted his

1 *Futūh al-Ghaib*, (Lecture No 32) pp 84-86

favours to others, made them reputed and honoured, although they belong to the same faith as you do and are the progency of Adam and Eve like you

"It is really so because you are like a fertile land on which God is sending down the rains consisting of endurance and resignation, conviction and faith, knowledge and grace The tree of your faith is taking roots, sprouting forth its branches, its shade closing over you, pushing out new shoots and fruits, getting higher and bigger without your providing any fertilizer to it God Almighty knows what you really need He has, therefore, assigned a befitting place for you in the Hereafter He has made you a lord in the life-to-come where His bounties are countless, inconceivable and unheard of As God has said, nobody knows what delights have been stored for your eyes in the Paradise This shall be your recompense for the faithful performance of what has been enjoined unto you, and your endurance, resignation and submission to the will of God

"As for those who have been well-afforded in this world, they have been placed in easy circumstances for they are like a barren land, rocky and sandy, which neither stores nor absorbs the rains, and it is difficult to implant the tree of faith in it It has, therefore, to be provided with fertilizers so that the weak saplings of their faith may get nourishment and push out the shoots of righteous action Thus, if the wealth, honour and fame are taken away from them, the tree of their faith shall waste away and its leaves and fruits shall wither although God intends to make it strong Therefore, my poor brethren, you ought to know that the faith of the wealthy does not have deeper roots, it lacks that strength which has been endowed to you, and it needs the riches and earthly prizes for its nourishment If these gifts were to be taken away from them, their faith will give place to blasphemy and they shall join the ranks of infidels, apostates and hypocrites, unless, of course, God

bestows on them spiritual light and illumination, endurance and resignation to strengthen their faith."[1]

Worldly Pleasures :

'Abdul Qādir did not preach asceticism nor did he exhort to give up the worldly possessions. What he emphasised upon in his sermons was that these should be made use of by a man to the extent he needs them but he should never allow himself to become a slave of his desires and temptations, nor should he hold the earthly gifts dear to his heart. Explaining the purport of the Tradition which runs: *Verily, the world has been created for you, and you have been created for the Hereafter*, he says :

"Do not try to obtain your share of the worldly gifts in a way that you have to keep standing before it like a beggar. You ought to be like a sovereign who keeps himself seated while the gifts are presented before him This world acclaims those who stand and wait at the door of God Almighty but it demeans those who wait upon it. Therefore, get your share of the worldly benefits without demeaning yourself or compromising your dignity, and this is what Allah expects of you "[2]

In another sermon he says :

"It is perfectly lawful to lay hands on the world and its gifts, to possess it or even to accumulate it for a commendable purpose, but it is forbidden to set your heart upon it You may allow it to stand at the door of your heart but it is prohibited to allow it to get inside the door, for it shall not bring any honour to you "[3]

Critique of the Kings :

'Abdul Qādir did not sermonise and admonish the populace alone; he fearlessly performed the duty made incumbent by the *Shari'ah* i e. of enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong , and,

1 *Futūh al-Ghaib*, (Lecture No 25), pp 65-67
2 *Fatah al-Rabbāni*, (Lecture No 21), p 145
3 *Ibid* , (Lecture No 51), p 363

whenever he considered it necessary, he publicly denounced the actions and policies of the kings, nobles, and officials He bitterly criticized the faults of the great ones without the slightest consideration of their power or position Hafiz 'Imad ud-din ibn Kathīr, a historian of his time, has made a mention of it in these words

> "He admonished all—the caliphs, vaziers, kings, jurists, elite and the laity—to adopt the righteous course and to forsake the things forbidden He openly criticized, unsparingly, everyone to his face in his discourses
>
> "He used to denounce the authorities sternly if any tyrant was appointed to a public office by them He never cared for anyone if he saw the commands of God being overstepped "[1]

Ibn Kathir writes that when Caliph al-Muqtafi l'Amr Illāh appointed Abul Wafā' Yahya, a man notorious for his cruelty, as a Cadi, 'Abdul Qādir admonished the Caliph in these words:

> "You have appointed a man notorious as the 'Most Tyrant' to rule over the Muslims What would your answer be tomorrow on the Day of Judgment, before the Lord of the Worlds, the Most Merciful?"[2]

Ibn Kathir further says that when the Caliph came to know of the admonition of 'Abdul Qādir he burst into tears and immediately dismissed Abul Wafā' Yahya from the office

'Abdul Qādir also vigorously condemned this-worldliness of those scholars, jurists and saints who were prepared to accept an office or to act as entourages of the rulers He held this class responsible for the waywardness of the kings and ruling chiefs In one of his addresses he rebuked these elements thus

> "Ah, you are the fellows who have misused your knowledge and wisdom What have you to do with your predecessors? You are enemies of God and His Apostle, you are no less than the robbers, tyrants and hypocrites!

1 Ibn Kathir Vol XII, p 252 and *Qalā'id al-Jawāhir*, p 8

2 *Qalā'id al-Jawāhir*, p 8

How long will you persist in your pious fraud? How long will you continue to don this shroud of assumed piety for the sake of your kings and rulers? How long will you remain a slave of power and position, passions and desires? Verily, you and most of your kings are tyrants and traitors unto God and His bondsmen O' God, our Lord, either degrade these transgressors and humiliate them or make them repent for their sins; either mortify the tyrants and efface them from Thy earth or let them mend their ways "[1]

On another occasion he addressed a religious scholar in these words

"Are you not ashamed that your avarice has forced you to serve these tyrants and crave for the emoluments declared unlawful and prohibited by the *Shari'ah*? How long shall you hold on to your mean pursuits? The kingdom of the rulers to whom you are playing a second fiddle shall shortly be no more and then you shall be presented before God Almighty who is Eternal, Omnipotent "[2]

Concern for Moral Rectitude :

Extremely solicitous of eradicating the moral laxity and viciousness produced by ever increasing opulence, luxury and indolence in the metropolis of Islam, 'Abdul Qādir sometimes came out with the most severe criticism of the then society giving expression to his heartfelt misery over the sinful ways of the people This was the impassioned appeal made by 'Abdul Qādir in one of his sermons

"The edifice of Faith built by the Apostle of God is being demolished, brick by brick, and now it is about to fall to pieces Come, O' mankind, to rebuild what has been dismantled and renovate what has been laid waste. Until this task is completed, we have to work jointly as a team

1 *Fatah al-Rabbāni*, (Lecture No 51), p 363
2 *Ibid*, (Lecture No 52) p 371

Come to my aid, O' Sun, O' Moon and O' Stars "[1]

Again, in another sermon he says

"Islam is shedding tears Its wail of woe is on account of the blasphemous hypocrites and innovators who are practising a pious fraud by attributing things that do not belong to Islam

"Look at your predecessors They lived like you but enjoined the right and prohibited the wrong But you have forgotten them altogether so soon after their death !

"Do you not know that even dog is faithful to his master ? He guards his fields and the cattle, is pleased to see his master although he does not get more than a few crumbs in the evening You are favoured with the bounties of God but, quite the other way, you are neither thankful to Him nor you dutifully perform the task assigned to you Instead, what you do is to break His commands and transgress the limits of the *Shari'ah* "[2]

Reform and Renovation :

The impressive sermons of 'Abdul Qādir were a source of inspiration to innumerable persons in Baghdad These enabled thousands to offer earnest repentance for their sins but in order to build up a movement aiming at a widespread and permanent reform of the social, moral and spiritual life of the people, it was necessary to find out a way whereby more durable relations could be fostered between the mentor and the disciples and, at the same time, arrangements could also be made for the religious education and training of the latter As it were, the discourses did not provide a permanent link between the speaker and the audience People came to these meetings, listened to the sermons and left to come back again or not, at their sweet will Many of them persisted in the way they had been treading along without paying any heed to the call of the reformer to purify their souls and to rectify their moral behaviour

1 *Fatah al-Rabbāni*, p 649

2 *Ibid*,, p 661

Religious seminaries and educational institutions too did not provide an answer to the problem because of the vast population of Muslims and the mundance pre-occupations of the people. The problem of making arrangements for a continued and concerted effort for the education and training of the people in religious tenets and practices, and infusing a breath of new life in the vast numbers spread over far off lands defied a solution in the absence of a truly Islamic State The foremost business or rather the end of the Caliphate was, in the words of Caliph ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAziz, to guide the people in moral rectitude rather than to collect revenues for the conduct of administration The then Muslim States were, however, not only indifferent to this fundamental objective but were also extremely allergic to any movement or criticism on this score which could pose a threat to their political supremacy Thus, these governments being suspicious of all efforts made for the resurgence of Islamic spirit, and, erroneously taking these as movements designed to build up political leader-ship, lost no time in crushing them

In these circumstances there was no way left to revivify the religious spirit and fill the people with an enthusiasm, zeal and self-confidence for reintroduction of the precepts of religion in their daily life The only alternative left was to call upon the people to take an oath of allegiance for the purpose Following in the footsteps of the Apostle of God, it had become necessary that a guide of spiritual and moral excellence should obtain an oath, or the *baʿit*, as it is called, from the people willing to offer sincere penitence and undertaking to lead a virtuous life in future in accordance with the directions of their mentor. If placing oneself under the instruction of an inspired guide meant that he was fairly started upon in his journey to the end of purification of spirit and moral rectitude, the oath of allegiance enjoined a much more onerous responsibility on the mentor himself The guide or the spiritual teacher had to lead the wandering soul of the disciple taking the *baʿit*, stage by stage, from cleansing of his spiritual impurities, renouncing the love of worldly temptations and desires wealth and honour, infusing an spirit of moral uprightness

correct ethical behaviour, following the teachings contained in the Qur^{c}ān and the Traditions, to the illumination of the pupil's soul This was, in truth, what the *ba^{c}it* meant and by which the inspired souls tried to infuse into their disciples, through preaching and personal example, loving care and unalloyed sincerity, an inner vitality of spirit and strength of moral integrity As the experience shows, the reformers and renovators of faith did succeed in revivifying the true faith and tapping new sources of popular strength in their own times, through this tried and infallible method which just copied the procedure and technique followed by the Prophet of Islam. Innumerable persons have been provided with an opportunity of not only adopting a virtuous life through this method but have also been led to attain even the stage of "Divine Acquaintance" and "Love" by the inspired guides and teachers, of whom the mentor *par excellence* was Sheikh Muhi ud-dīn ^{c}Abdul Qādir Jilani. The history of peoples subscribing to the faith of Islam will bear a witness that no guide with an illuminated soul had been more successful than ^{c}Abdul Qādir in bringing about a revival and resurgence of the true Islamic spirit At the same time, the method followed by him is still the easiest and most effective way of filling the people with faith and enthusiasm aiming at the reformation of their lives in accordance with the tenets of Islam

A few divines and mystics had employed the method of *ba^{c}it*, as the annalists report, before ^{c}Abdul Qādir but none had achieved the success as he did With his profound knowledge, intellectual gifts, charming and loving personality and spiritual excellence he renovated the system of *ba^{c}it* and founded a new mystic order known as the *Qādiriyah* ^{c}Abdul Qādir elaborated and systematised the mystic practices, made these more wide-based and developed to make them more harmonious with the tenets of the *Shari^{c}ah* Countless people were guided through this path of self-discipline, devotion to God and virtuous living during the life time of ^{c}Abdul Qādir, and after him, his disciples propagated the *Qādiriyah* order in almost every Islamic country. The branches of the order were founded in Yaman, Hadhramaut, India, Indonesia

and in the countries of Africa where it helped innumerable people to come back to the path of loyalty and obedience to God and His Apostle.[1] ʿAbdul Qādir and his disciples were also successful in converting a considerable number of non-Muslims to Islam.

Influence of ʿAbdul Qādir :

The moral and spiritual excellence of ʿAbdul Qādir, his unflinching devotion to God, the efficacy of his sermons, the inspiring and regenerating influence exercised by him over the people in his own time and the upright character and moral rectitude of those who have had an opportunity to be instructed by him, mark him as one of the most eminent men of God born in Islam He was not only a worker of incessant miracles, as the chroniclers of his time report, but his miracle of miracles lay in his inspiring and impressive teachings which made thousands to turn away from the lust of power and wealth and to inculcate the

1 Among the disciples of ʿAbdul Qādir who devoted their life to the cause of preaching and inviting people through their precepts and example to spiritual and moral purification, the most notable was Sheikh Shahāb ud-dīn Suharwardi (593—632 A H), the spiritual successor and nephew of Sheikh Abū Najib Suharwardi He was the founder of another *Sufi* order known as *Suharwardiya* He also wrote a very popular work entitled '*Awarif ul-Maʿārif*' on mysticism Ibn Khallikān writes that during his old age he was the greatest mystic of Baghdad and there was none so pious and popular as he (Ibn Khalhkān, Vol III, p 119) Another writer, Ibn al-Najjār has left records about his immense popularity and preachings (*Mirʾat ul-Jinān*, Vol IV, p 81) Ibn Khallikān writes that mystics from far off places visited him for guidance and spiritual light Ibn Khallikān adds that his sermons were very efficacious (Ibn Khallikān Vol III, pp 119-120) ʿ*Awarif al-Maʿārif*, written by Shahab ud-din Suharwardi, has a pride of place among the mystic works One of its distinguishing features is that unlike the mystic writings of the earlier *sufis*, it upholds the tenets of the orthodox school and cleanses the *Shariʿah* of all innovations (*Tiqsār-e-Juyūd*, p 63)

Shahab ud-din Suharwardi too was fortunate in having some very notable personages among his disciples One of these, Bahāʾ ud-din Zakariya Multani was a well known and eminent saint of his time in India

true spirit of faith through self-correction and purification of the soul In short, his was an striking example of the innate power of Islam to produce a true spirit of religion, love of God and moral righteousness in an age of crass materialism

Death of ʿAbdul Qādir :

ʿAbdul Qādir died at the age of 90, in 561 A H An account of the death of ʿAbdul Qādir has been preserved by his son, Sharaf ud-din ʿIsā Thus he writes·

> "During his last illness, ʿAbdul Wahāb (brother of Sharaf ud-din) requested Sheikh ʿAbdul Qādir to give him some advice which he could follow after his death The Sheikh replied 'Inculcate a deep consciousness of the sublimity and grandeur of God Fear not anyone nor cherish a desire for benefit from anybody save God Entrust all of your needs to Him and then have confidence in Him Whatever you need, place it before God with a conviction in the prospect of its fulfilment Keep yourself constantly occupied with *Tawhid*, the Unity of God, on which there is a consensus, for, when the heart is filled with awe, love and respect for Him, nothing can escape it or get out of it' Thereafter he asked his sons to clear out saying 'You find me here with yourself but I am really with others Make room for the angels who are here besides me You ought to be courteous and pay homage to them I find the blessings from God descending here for which you should leave ample space' He saluted from time to time some invisible beings for a day and a night He would say 'May the peace and blessings of God be upon you. May God pardon you and me and accept our repentance Come, in the name of God Almighty, and do not go back' "

Once he said :

> "Woe be unto you I care not a whit for anything, neither for the Angel of Death or any other angel My God has bestowed blessings on me far in excess of you.
>
> "In the night the Sheikh died he gave a loud cry He

lifted and stretched his hand several times Thereafter, he addressed his sons, 'Abdur Razzāq and Mūsa, saying· 'May God have peace and blessings on you. Pay attention to God and grasp His attributes' Then he said· 'I am just coming to you Be more kind to me' He remained unconscious for a while after that On regaining consciousness he exclaimed 'There is as much difference between you and me as between the heavens and the earth Don't think of me like anybody else' When 'Abdul 'Aziz, one of his sons, asked about his illness, he replied 'Don't ask me anything. I am immersed in the gnosis of God Almighty' In reply to another question asked by 'Abdul Aziz his reply was 'No body knows my illness, nor can anyone diagnose it, neither the jinn, nor men, nor angels The command of God never supersedes His knowledge, the order changes but not His knowledge, God may override His command by another one, but never what is contained in His knowledge He obliterates or preserves whatever He desires; He is the final Authority above whom there is none, unlike a human being who has to render an account for his actions, God is Omnipotent Now I know the secrets of His attributes, they are what they are'

"One of his sons, 'Abdul Jabbār asked him if he had any pain The Sheikh replied to him 'I have pain in my entire body except my heart which is attuned to God' Then in his last moments he said 'I seek the help of God Almighty save whom there is no other God, Glorified is He, the Most High, He is Ever-living for death seizeth Him not, Praise be unto Him for He is the Exalted, the Mighty, He exercises His power through the death of his creations I bear witness that there is no God save Allah and that Muhammad is the Apostle of God' His son Mūsa relates that he tried to say '*Ta'azzaza*' i e 'Exalted and Dominant is He' but he was not able to pronounce it correctly He tried again and again till he pronounced the word correctly. Thereafter, he said thrice, 'Allah, Allah. Allah,'-

his voice failed thereafter, the tongue having been fixed up in the palate, his soul departed from the body "[1]

'Abdul Qādir left quite a large number of pious and saintly disciples who continued to disseminate his message and fight this-worldliness and its vices like opulence and luxury, fame and power.

1 *Futūh ul-Ghaib*, pp 189-192

CHAPTER IX

IBN AL-JAWZI

Ibn al-Jawzi presents another striking example of a preacher, reformer and renovator of the faith. He was the most reputed and profound scholar of his time and a prolific writer of voluminous books on exegesis of the Qurʿān, Traditions, history and literary criticism

Early Life:

Born in 508 A. H. at Baghdad, Ibn al-Jawzi was 38 years younger than ʿAbdul Qādir. His father died when he was still young but his mother sent him to study under a reputed traditionist of the day, Ibn Nāsir. He committed the Qurʿān to memory and learnt its recitation, studied the Traditions and calligraphy. Describing his childhood days to his son, Ibn al-Jawzi says:

> "I quite recollect that I was admitted to the primary school at the age of six Boys much more elder than me were my class-mates I do not recollect if I had ever spent my time in playing or laughing with other boys. Instead of witnessing the performance of the jugglers who frequently held their shows in the field in front of the mosque where I studied, I used to attend the lectures on Traditions. Whatever Traditions or biographical accounts of the Prophet were related in the lectures, those were memorised by me and then I also used to take them down on reaching home. Other boys spent their time in playing along the banks of the river but I invariably used to sit down with a book in my hand in a corner and read it from cover to cover.
>
> "I was always so anxious to attend the classes in time that often I doubled up to reach the school before the

lectures began It was not unoften that I had nothing to eat for the whole day but I am thankful to God that I have never had an occasion to be grateful to anybody in that connexion "[1]

Zeal for the Traditions:

Ibn al-Jawzi had an intense enthusiasm for acquiring knowledge and propagating the Traditions of the Apostle of God His works on the subject were so numerous that, as the chroniclers of his time report, Ibn al-Jawzi had made a will that the water for the ritual washing of his dead body should be heated by burning the clippings and ends of his pens used for writing the Traditions It is further related that these clippings were found more than sufficient for the purpose [2]

Ibn al-Jawzi was a voracious reader from an early age In his time Baghdad had well-stocked libraries where he used to spend most of his time. He read whatever book he could lay his hands on In one of his books entitled *Said al-Khatir*, an autobiographical memoir, he writes.

"I may state here my own cast of mind I am never tired of reading books and my joy knows no bounds whenever I find a new book It would appear to be an exaggeration if I say that I had gone through 20,000 books during my student days I came to know of the courage and large-heartedness, erudition and tenacious memory, piety and eagerness for prayer cherished by the savants of the old, which I could not have learnt without reading those books The study of the books in those days also revealed to me the shallow knowledge of the scholars in our times and the dull spirits of the students now-a-days [3]

Penmanship of Ibn al-Jawzi:

Ibn al-Jawzi turned to writing from an early age He began

1 *Nasihat ul-Walad*, pp 81-82
2. Ibn Khallikān, Vol III, p. 321
3 *Said al-Khatir*, Vol III, pp 607-608.

writing four folios daily and continued the practice throughout his life. Ibn Taymiyah relates that when he took a stock of Ibn al-Jawzi's books, they were found to be more than one thousand in number. Ibn al-Jawzi had such a profound knowledge of the science of Traditions that he claimed to tell the authenticity or otherwise of any Tradition with reference to the character of those through whom the Tradition had been handed down or with reference to the manner in which it had been narrated He was also without a peer as a litterateur and as an orator

His Piety :

Ibn al-Jawzi was as much celebrated for his moral uprightness, devotion and piety as for his literary attainments His grandson, Abul Muzaffar, relates that Ibn al-Jawzi completed recitation of the Qur'ān every week, he never spent his time in fun or frolics during his childhood and never ate anything unless he was sure that it had been obtained through lawful means Ibn al-Najjār records that in religious devotion and observance of prayers he presented a sublime picture of saintliness Another annalist, Ibn al-Fārsi says that Ibn al-Jawzi kept vigils by night and was never forgetful of the recollection of God The works of Ibn al-Jawzi present an striking example of his fervent devotion and the heartfelt love of God. In an autobiographical passage included in the *Said al-Khatir* he writes

> "From early childhood I had an inclination towards devotion to religious contemplation and worship I zealously observed obligatory as well as supererogatory prayers and preferred seclusion Spending my days thus, I felt peace and enlightenment. I extremely regretted the time spent otherwise for I had an ardent desire to utilize every moment of my life under a diligent consciousness of the Omnipresent Lord. In those days I felt my heart attuned to God while my supplications and benedictions were a source of indescribable pleasure to me My lectures and discourses, quite effective in those days, it appears, attracted a few high officials and chiefs who wanted to come closer

to me by paying homage and putting themselves at my service As it were, I too felt inclined towards them but in their company I lost the sense of peace and sanctifying grace that I enjoyed earlier in my supplications. Thereafter other functionaries of the government started gaining my favour with the result that the precautions I used to take earlier in regard to avoiding everything unlawful and doubtful, gave place to a sense of complacency It was still not so deplorable but gradually my specious reasoning made the doubtful objects appear as perfectly lawful and, then, I realised that I had lost the sublimity and purity of my heart, instead, it seemed, as if a profaneness had taken its place which gave rise to restlessness and disquietitude in me. I witnessed that my sermons too bore a mark of my anxiety which caused an ever larger number of persons to offer penitence for their sins while my own guilt weighed heavily on my consciousness. This, obviously, made me still more disturbed, but there seemed to be no way out. I visited the tombs of the saints and earnestly beseeched God to show me the right path. Ultimately, God helped me and I again felt an inclination to spend more of my time in prayer and solitude Now I came to know what was wrong with me and I thanked my Lord, the Most Compassionate and Merciful, for His kindness "[1]

Character of Ibn al-Jawzi :

He is reported to have been a well-built man with handsome features and an imposing countenance Favoured with easy circumstances "he possessed a refined taste", says Muwaffaq 'Abdul Latif, "in dress and dietary habits and was charming and graceful". Another annalist, Ibn al-Dayni relates that Ibn al-Jawzi was soft-spoken, handsome and of medium height, reputed for his clemency and generosity Extremely careful of his health, he liked what may be called the "good things of temperate quality."

1. *Said al-Khatir*, Vol. I, pp. 121-122

In the *Said al-Khatir* and the *Talbis-o-Iblis* he has mentioned his numerous clinical experiences and advised against penance and arduous religious practices which had then been introduced by the Iranian mystics

Encyclopædic Knowledge:

The most outstanding feature of Ibn al-Jawzi's character is his versatility. He towered over his contemporaries in his ardent desire to be well versed in almost every branch of learning. He has himself described it in some detail in the *Said al-Khatir*.

> "The greatest trial for man lies in the loftiness of his ambition· the higher is one's ambition, the loftier aspiration for advancement or success one has However, he is sometimes unable to achieve it owing to unfavourable circumstances, or because he lacks the means, and thus causes dissatisfaction God has, however, made me so ambitious that I have always a hankering for something higher But I have never wished that God might not have made me too ambitious It is true that life can be fully enjoyed only by a care-free, imprudent and a listless fellow but nobody endowed with brains would ever like retrogression of his intellect simply for the sake of getting more fun out of worldly pleasures. I know of many people who are boastful of their lofty ambitions but I have found their aspirations really limited to only one field of their activity in which they are ardently desirous of achieving success These people are completely indifferent to their deficiency in other fields A poet by the name of Sharif Radhi once said in a couplet 'Ill health is never without a cause, but in my case it is because of too high an aspiration.' However, on going through his biographical accounts I found that he had no ambition save achieving power and position.
>
> "It is related that Abū Muslim Khurāsāni could not sleep well during his youthful days. When asked about the reason for it, he replied, 'How can I sleep? Brilliant and

ambitious though I am, I have been condemned to lead a life of poverty and obscurity'

'Then, what would satisfy you ?' asked someone He replied, 'I would be satisfied only if I achieve greatness and power '

'Then try for it,' he was told

'This would not be possible without putting my life at stake', replied he

He was asked again, 'But why dont' you do so ?'

He said, 'Intellect asks me not to run into danger '

'What would you do then ?' was demanded of him

'I would not accept the advice of my intellect,' replied Abū Muslim, 'and would give myself up to my folly I will play a desperate game at the bidding of my ambition and seek the help of intellect only where imprudence fails me I have no other course left, as poverty and obscurity are interdependent'

"On giving further thought to this self-deluded yet ambitious man I came to the conclusion that he had not given thought to one of the most important factors, and that was the question of life-to-come He was mad after political power for which he had to be cruel and unsparing of innocent human lives He got just a fraction of the worldly power and glory, the things he aspired, for a short duration of only eight years Thereafter he fell an easy victim to the treachery of al-Saffāh, and then his intellect did not come to his aid It was the same with al-Mutannabbi too who was so pretentious of his ambitions, but he was also enamoured of worldly success

"My ambition is however, quite different from theirs I aspire for a profound knowledge embracing the entire field of learning, which, I know, I cannot attain I want to achieve a thorough and complete knowledge of every branch of learning which is obviously not possible in the short span of human life. I do not consider anyone perfect in the knowledge of a science so long as he lacks perfection

in another branch, as, for example, if a traditionist is not a master of jurisprudence too I consider his knowledge to be incomplete

"The imperfection of knowledge, I think, can be attributed to the lack of ambition alone. Not only that. to me the end of knowledge means an ability to act on it Thus, what I want is that I should be able to combine with my knowledge the assiduity of Bishr Hāfi and piety of Maʿarūf Karkhi But it is hardly possible to achieve these along with the pre-occupations of studying and teaching and attending to other mundane affairs And this is not all, I aspire to oblige others but do not want to lie under their obligation, my pre-occupation with the studies is an impediment in the way of my earnings but I detest to be indebted to anyone or to accept gifts from others I ardently desire to have children as well as to be an author of merit and distinction so that these may commemorate my memory, but both these pursuits stand in the way of solitude and contemplation I also do like to enjoy the lawful pleasures but do not possess the means for achieving these and if I devote myself to get at these, I would lose the contentment and peace of mind Similar is the case with other matters, as, for example, I like the delicacies and refinements which my good taste desires All these in fact mean aspiring for diametrical ends What have those persons to do with these lofty ideals who aspire simply for worldly success, wealth, power and position? I too want worldly success but in a manner that I do not have to impair my faith or to expose my learning or virtuous action to any risk or injury. Who can appreciate the demands of my ambition: on the one hand I relish contemplation and prayer, divine manifestation and illumination of heart, but, on the other, I have an inclination for the cultivation of knowledge, teaching and penmanship. The first requires penance, fasting and seclusion while the latter demands nourishment and mixing with the people Spiritual

contraction is unbearable for me, but making the both ends meet for my dependents stands in the way of my spiritual progress I have endured these strains all through my life and submitted to the will of God for, it seems, the path to success and perfection lies through struggles and afflictions For the loftiest ideal is to seek the pleasure of God Almighty, I guard myself of every defilement and take care that not a single moment of my life is spent in any vain effort. Glory be to God, if I succeed in my endeavours; but, I won't mind if I fail for the Prophet has said that the intention of the faithful is better than his action "[1]

Popular Enthusiasm :

The sermons delivered by Ibn al-Jawzi were attended by the caliphs, kings and chiefs of the state besides the common people of Baghdad It is reported that his lectures were normally attended by ten to fifteen thousand persons and sometimes the number went up even to a hundred thousand[2] An eloquent speaker as he was, his sermons breathed an almost tragic urgency behind his message which touched the heart of his audience His soul-stirring calls so carried away the listeners that many of them burst into tears, broke down into hysterical screams or even tore off their shirts Innumerable persons offered earnest repentence for their sins as a result of his sermons It is estimated that Ibn al-Jawzi secured conversion of 20,000 Christians and Jews and over a hundred thousand people made solemn affirmations to lead a virtuous life after listening to his sermons[3]

Ibn al-Jawzi always condemned innovations and unlawful accretions to the Faith in his sermons, asking the people to follow the path enjoined by the Scripture and the Traditions Because of Ibn al-Jawzi's profound knowledge and eloquence as also his popularity the sectaries of heretical factions never dared to

1. *Said al-Khatir*, Vol II, pp 334-337.
2 *Ibid*, Vol I, p 21
3. *Ibid*, Vol I, p 21.

controvert him, with the result that the orthodox school gained a dominating influence The Caliphs and nobles of the time became followers of the Hanbalite school which was distinguished for its strict adherence to the Traditions and the Scripture

Literary Endeavours :

Ibn al-Jawzi produced some of the most distinguished works which had a profound effect on the subsequent academic endeavours His writings helped the suceeeding generations to keep to the right path as enjoined by the *Shari'ah*

Kitāb ul-Mauzū'āt is Ibn al-Jawzi's chief work on the Traditions In this book he has discussed all those spurious or weak Traditions which were then commonly relied upon by the heretics for spreading beliefs contrary to the authorised teachings of the conformist school It is true that Ibn al-Jawzi has been too harsh in his judgments since he has adopted an extremist course in regard to certain issues dealt with by him in this book, nevertheless, he has performed an invaluable task by exposing the fallacies of the heretics and innovators

Talbis-o-Iblis is a critical study of the then Muslim society by Ibn al-Jawzi. In this book he has made a critical evaluation of the different classes and sections of the Muslim society of his time, highlighted their weaknesses, misconceptions and aberrations and delineated the causes which had given birth to different vices marring their faith action and behaviour Ibn al-Jawzi has set-forth the habits and customs, faults and self-deceits to which the scholars, jurists, preachers, writers, rulers and the pious often fall a prey This book is an outstanding example of the panoramic character of Ibn al-Jawzi's writings, he shows an awareness of the mental, emotional and social attitudes of the different classes of Muslim society along with the beliefs and doctrines of heretic sections, and the subtle ways in which the latter mislead others

Critique of the Scholars and Administrators :

The criticism by Ibn al-Jawzi is at places too severe in the *Talbis-o-Iblis*, as is his verdict symbolic of his extremist views, yet

the book contains a mine of useful information since it deals extensively with the vices found among different sections of the people One has generally to agree with Ibn al-Jawzi's analysis which also gives an idea of the liveliness and incisiveness of his intellectual grasp

Criticising the scholars of his time, some of whom were engaged in unnecessary hairsplitting of legal issues, he writes in the *Talbis-o-Iblis*

> "One of the greatest weaknesses of these scholar-jurists is that they have occupied themselves with the vain discussions but they do not pay heed to the Scripture, Traditions and the biographies of the companions of the Prophet which would have had a salutary effect towards the purification of their souls It hardly needs any emphasis that the discussions on trifling issues like the kinds of impurities and the methods of purification would not make one tender-hearted or receptive of the awe of God What is needed by man is the recollection of God and the discourses on the subject so that these may create a longing for success in the life-to-come There is no denying the fact that ethical issues are not beyond the sphere of the *Shari'ah*, but these are by themselves not sufficient for achieving the ultimate objective How can these persons be expected to follow the example of the pious souls of the bygone days, whose faith they profess to own, unless they endeavour to get at the state of ecstacy and propinquity to God attained by them? One should not lose sight of the fact that man is indolent by nature, and if left to himself, he would be inclined to follow the beaten track of his day On the other hand, if he tries to cultivate the knowledge of beliefs and behaviour of the pious and elevated mentors of the former times, he would naturally try to take after their ways A mentor of the yore has well said that he would prefer a Tradition that would make him soft-hearted to a hundred legal decisions of Cadi Shuraih."[1]

1 *Tablis-o-Iblis*, pp 119-120

In his critique of the preachers in the same book, Ibn al-Jawzi observes

> "Most of these preachers are accustomed to using a grandiloquent and heavily embellished language which often means nothing. The greater portions of their discourses are devoted to the accounts of the Prophet Moses, Mount Sinai, Joseph and Gelicho (Zulaikha), or the like, but they have hardly to say anything about the obligatory performances enjoined by the religion or how to avoid sins How can their sermons prevail upon an adulterer to offer penitence; or else convince a woman to be faithful and maintain good relations with her husband ? These discourses are completely devoid of the ethical or religious teachings of the *Shari'ah* This is also one of the reasons for these sermons being so popular, for the truth is always distasteful while falsehood is pleasing "[1]

Further, continuing the same subject, he observes :

> "It often so happens that the preacher is sincere and honest but he wants to win over and dominate the hearts of his audience. He wants to extort admiration from others. A sure symptom of this vice is that if another preacher tries to help him or begins to deliver lectures to his audience, he does not relish it although a sincere person would have welcomed the helping hand in his endeavour."[2]

Ibn al-Jawzi also criticises the scholars for their lack of sincerity. He writes

> "If the students of any scholar leave their teacher to sit at the feet of another savant more learned and reputed than him, he feels a heartburning which is not befitting a sincere scholar Sincere savants and teachers are like physicians who treat the people simply to propitiate God and bless with contentment another physician who is able to cure their patient "[3]

1 *Talbis-e-Iblis*, p 125
2 *Ibid* , p 125
3 *Ibid* , p 131.

In connection with the vices developed by the kings, rulers and administrators, Ibn al-Jawzi writes

> "These people prefer to pattern their behaviour according to their own wishes rather than do what the *Shari'ah* enjoins They would cut off the hand or execute a person even though it might not be lawful to do so They labour under the misconception that what they do is essential as a matter of political expediency This means, in other words, that the *Shari'ah* is incomplete and they are now making up for that deficiency
>
> "This is in reality a great deception created by the Satan , for, the *Shari'ah* comprises divine guidance for the conduct of our temporal affairs as well, and it is unthinkable that the guidance vouchsafed by God should be deficient God Almighty has ordained· *We have not left anything incomplete in the Scripture*, and also *There is none to amend Our order* Thus, the man who wants to superimpose his own ideas over the *Shari'ah* in the garb of political expediency, really claims that the guidance vouchsafed to man by God is imperfect and incomplete This is obviously blasphemous "[1]

Ibn al-Jawzi points out another weakness of the rulers and administrators in these words

> "Besides their persistence on their wrongful ways they also ardently desire to pay a visit to some pious and godly personage for the purpose of seeking his benediction in their favour The devil has brought them round to believe that the solemn invocation of the divine blessings by a godly person would make the burden of their sins lighter This is, however, not so Once a trader whose goods had been withheld by a collector of the toll-tax went to the reputed saint Mālik ibn Dinār and requested him for his help Mālik ibn Dinār went to the collector of the toll-tax who treated him respectfully and released the goods

1 *Talbis-e-Iblis*, p 132

of the tradesman Thereafter the official asked Mālik ibn Dinār to pray for him but Mālik replied, 'Ask this purse in which you keep the money acquired illegally, to pray for you How can I invoke blessings for you when countless people curse you?' 'Do you think,' added Mālik, 'that God will accept the entreaties of a single individual in preference to the prayers of a thousand others?' "[1]

At another place he writes

"The rich and the affluent have a great regard for such misguided mystics who approve of the hearing of songs and playing on musical instruments They are lavish in spending their riches on these mystics but would not part with a single shell for the sake of scholars and savants As a matter of fact, the scholars are like physicians on whose advice a man spends his money grudgingly only when he falls ill On the other hand, the misguided mystics and the musicians and singers accompanying them are like courtiers and flatterers who are normally hangers-on of every wealthy person[2]

"Likewise, they are devoted to the ascetics and other persons of assumed piety, and prefer them to the doctors of religion They would readily submit to a charlatan attired as a mendicant, if he practises a pious fraud upon them they are easily led astray and begin to sneer at the scholars for not being ascetics However, to hold the ascetics in higher esteem than the scholars is simply ignorance and an insult to the *Sharīʿah* These misguided persons should really be thankful to God that they were not present during the life-time of the Apostle of God for they would have turned apostate if they had seen him taking wives, eating, wearing clothes and enjoying honey."[3]

In his critique of the masses Ibn al-Jawzi writes:

"Satan has mislead the masses to believe that attending

1 *Talbīs-o-Iblīs*, p 134
2 *Ibid*, p 373
3 *Ibid*, pp 388-389

of religious discourses and raising a wail of woe are highly meritorious acts and the sole purpose of delivering these sermons This is perhaps because the people have been told about the merits of listening to these discourses but they do not know that the end of these sermons is reformation of their own morals and rectitude of their behaviour. Nor do they appear to be aware that whatever they listen to in these lectures shall be cited as an evidence against them on the Doomsday I personally know a number of persons who are attending such discourses for a number of years They get excited on hearing these sermons and burst into tears but they still persist in accepting interest, cheating others in their trade, remaining unmindful of the religious performances, and disobedience to their parents Satan has led them to believe that their presence in these sermons, their lamentations and fits of crying will atone for their neglected duties and the sins of omission and commission

There are also others who think that accompanying the pious and godly persons or paying visits to them shall be enough for expiation of their sins "[1]

In regard to the rich and affluent, Ibn al-Jawzi has the following to say

"Many among these persons spend lavishly on the construction of mosques or bridges but their object really is to become famous and win over the people by such acts of piety Another objective they have in view is that they should be remembered after their death, and, for that purpose they get their names inscribed on the foundation-stones of these edifices. Had they undertaken the construction of these works for the pleasure of God, they would have been content with the knowledge that God is aware of what they do If these persons were to be asked to get simply a wall constructed without having their names inscribed on it, they would never agree to it

1 *Talbis-o-Iblis* pp 393-394

"Likewise, these persons donate candle-sticks to the mosques during the month of *Ramadhan* although these remain without light during the remaining part of the year. They cannot, obviously, evoke admiration of others by providing oil for daily lighting, which they hope to attain by donation of a single candle-stick during the month of *Ramadhan*."[1]

Said al-Khatir:

Not strictly an autobiographical work, the book also contains reminiscences of Ibn al-Jawzi, his ideas and feelings and personal experiences In describing the incidents he had come across, Ibn al-Jawzi frankly admits his mistakes and weaknesses Ibn al-Jawzi often addresses his own self to criticise its longings and aspirations, gives an account of his mental and emotional states, describes his social experiences with the help of common and everyday happenings and relates the wisdom derived from the trials and tribulations, rough and tumble of life or his dealings with women, friends and servants. An outstanding feature of this book is its immaculate sincerity and simplicity. The book is also noted for the easy eloquence and lucidity of its style, which marks the first attempt made by an Arab writer in this direction, since the then prevailing style was to use a heavily embellished language in the literary works

Ibn al-Jawzi possessed a special gift to draw out wisdom from insignificant occurrences which many of us come across and pass over without paying any heed to them Here is an example from the *Sad al-Khatir*

"I saw two labourers who were carrying a heavy beam. Both were humming a song, when one recited a verse, the other listened to it attentively and then repeated it or came out with another verse in reply to the first. I thought that if they do not do so they would have a greater consciousness of their exertion By singing the labourers made their work

1 *Talbis-o-Iblis*, p 395

easier On further reflection I found that by engaging themselves in singing the minds of the labourers get a little respite, they get busy in another work for a short duration and thus refresh themselves This diversion also decreases the consciousness of the burden by diverting attention from the exertion of their work My attention was diverted from it to the burden of responsibilities and obligations enjoined by the *Shari'ah* I thought that perhaps the consciousness of these liabilities constitutes the heaviest burden on the self of man while the greatest effort lies in controlling and checking the propensities and impulses for which the self has a liking Thus, I arrived at the conclusion that one should cover the path of endurance with the help of giving it necessary respite and by allowing the consciousness to refresh itself by yielding to lawful pleasures A poet has rightly said that when the caravan gets tired of travelling for the whole night, tell the people that the dawn is at hand and that they would get the needed respite during the day.

"A similar story is told about Bishr Hāfi[1] who was going somewhere along with a companion The friend of Bishr Hāfi got thirsty and he asked Bishr to wait a bit so that he could get water from a well Bishr, however, advised him to wait till they reached the next well, and then to the next one After they had covered a considerable distance, Bishr told his friend that the life in this terrestrial world is also a journey which can be completed in that manner. The truth is that whoever is aware of the fact alluded to by Bishr, will console his self, cheer it up when in distress and assure it of lessening the burden so that it may bear the weight of its responsibilities with endurance A certain preceptor of the times past addressed his self thus 'O my self, if I check thee from thy fancies and attractions, it is only on account of my affection for

1 227 A H /841 A D

thee' Another master and devine, Bā Yazıd al-Bustamı,[1] once saıd 'I used to lead my wailing self flooded wıth tears towards God, then ıt gradually got familiar wıth the way and began to forge ahead cheerfully' It should thus be remembeıed that ıt ıs absolutely necessaıy to console and enlıven the self so thaı ıt may bear ıts burden patıently "[2]

At another place he wrıtes

"I have seen that when hounds pass by the sıde of wıld dogs, the latter baık at them and try to chase them. The wıld dogs arc envıous of the hounds because of theır dog-belts and clothıngs, but the hounds do not pay any attentıon to them as ıf they do not belong to the same specıes The wıld dogs aıe fat and clumsy, and aıe not trustworthy, the hounds, on the otheı hand, aıe lean, well-proportıoned and quick They arc also well-traıned and trustworthy It is out of the fear or on accouınt of the gratıtude to theır master that they brıng back the game to hım I have drawn two conclusıons from thıs compaıison Fırst, the frame and appearancc of a man has a beaııng upon hıs morals If the former has a fineı countenance, the latter would also be of a nıce demeanour Secondly, nobody ıs envıous towards oıie whom he does not consıder hıs equal Likewıse, a man who has been favouıed by God wıth faıth and wısdom bears no ıll-wıll againsı those who lack these qualıtıes even though the latteı mıght be moved by jealousy towards hım In fact the faıthful does not consıder the faıthless worthy of hıs attentıon, for, theır spheres of hopes and aspııatıons are quıte dıfferent one harbours a feelıng of hostılıty at another's good ın thıs world but the other aspıres for success ın the world-to-come There ıs a world of dıfference between the two "[3]

1 d 261 ٨ H /874 A D

2 *Saıd al-Khatır*, Vol I, pp 146-147

3 *Ibıd* Vol III, pp 639-640

Dialogue with the Self:

Ibn al-Jawzi sometimes applies the method of tracing an incident to its source so as to discover the general principles underlying that phenomenon Once he prayed to God along with another saintly person The prayer was answered by God and this made him to think as to whose prayer had found favour with God Here Ibn al-Jawzi analyses the incident with the help of self-dialogue

> "Once I was confronted with a difficulty for which I had to invoke Divine blessings and succour Accordingly, I prayed to God along with another godly person I felt that my prayer was about to be answered by God but I thought that it was not on account of my beseechings but because of the prayer of that pious soul I said to myself I am aware of my own sins and weaknesses which should not apparently allow my prayers to be answered, but who knows that God did not really accede to my own entreaties? I felt that although the reverend man of God who prayed for me should be free of those vices which, I knew, I suffered from, still there was a difference between him and myself I had a sense of regret and self-reproach for my sins while he was cheerful and enlivened And, it is not unoften that broken-hearted penitence is more propitious on occasions like this
>
> "There is, however, another matter in which both of us stood on an equal footing None of us solicited the favour of God on the ground of our moral excellence Now, if in these circumstances, I owned my mistakes and humbly prayed to God 'Take pity on me, Oh Lord, for I am empty-handed', there was every likelihood of my supplication having being granted Also, it is just possible that the other person might have had an eye on his actions which would have caused hinderance in the acceptance of his prayer
>
> "Therefore, O my Self, thou shouldst not make it insufferable for an already broken-hearted man like me I

am aware of my guilt, and I do also confess my sins, while, at the same time, I am aware of what I implore, and have a faith in the beneficence of my God to Whom I prefer my entreaties. God may bless that devoted soul if he lacks this quality, but so far as I am concerned, the confession of my guilt is my most valuable possession."[1]

At another place he again portrays his inner-struggle in these words:

"I was once undecided about a matter that was improper and unbecoming under the *Shari'ah* but my mind had brought forth certain arguments in its favour which apparently made it look lawful to me. In truth, however, it was nothing but specious reasoning because, as I later found out, it was manifestly abominable. However, I addressed myself to God and implored Him to ward off this state of indecision

"I also began the recitation of the Qur'ān so as to set my mind at rest As I had to teach the commentary of the Chapter 'Joseph'[2] I began my recitation from there I was so engrossed with the problem I had in mind that I did not pay much attention to what I was reading, but I was taken aback when I recited the verse, *He said I seek refuge in Allah! Lo! he is my lord, who hath treated me honourably*[3] I felt as if this verse had been revealed for me I said to myself. Didst thou follow it? Joseph was free, he was wrongfully made a slave and sold to Potiphar Joseph felt so grateful to Potiphar that he called him his lord, although neither Joseph was a slave nor Potiphar a master The chief reason for this gratefulness of Joseph to Potiphar was that the latter had treated him honourably 'Now think of thy own self', I said to myself 'Thou art really slave of a Master who has been a benefactor ever since thy

1 *Said al-Khatir*, Vol I, pp 157-158
2 Chapter XII of the Qur'ān
3 *Yūsuf* 23

birth Nobody knows how many times he has over-looked thy mistakes Dost thou remember how He provided thy needs? It was by His grace that thou acquired knowledge and earned thy living He guarded thee from every danger and guided thee to adopt the right course He saved thee from the hostility of thy enemies. He bestowed on thee a goodly appearance as well as intellectual gift He enabled thee to master the sciences in a short duration although others could not acquire these over a much longer period He also favoured thee with eloquence, intellect and memory, caused the people to show thee kindness and reverence, and made it easy for thee to procure thy livelihood without having to lie under an obligation to others It is not possible, in truth and reality, to thank Him for the innumerable favours He has bestowed on thee the good-looking countenance, well-proportioned limbs, worthy demeanour, refined taste, intellectual grit, discrimination to adopt the right path and to avoid lewdness, opportunity to acquire knowledge of the Traditions and to act on it--Verily, *if ye would count the bounty of Allah ye cannot reckon it*[1] How many of thy enemies laid snares for thee, but God saved thee, how they wanted to discredit thee, but He exalted thee, how many favours were granted to thee, but denied to others, how many people left this world broken-hearted, but thou were crowned with success. Dost thou not see that thou are in good health, have sound intellect and a wholesome faith, thy knowledge is abounding, thy aspirations are fulfilled and if thou art ever thwarted in any desire, God makes thee patient and forbearing till thou knowest that it was really profitable that thy desire did not meet with success It would be impossible to recount all the favours of God bestowed on thee, since, the unknown bounties invested by God on man are far in excess of those that he can comprehend Then, how didst thou consider it lawful to do something which was considered

1 *Ibrāhīm* 34

unclean by God Almighty *I seek refuge in Allah! Lo! He is my lord, Who hath treated me honourably Lo! wrong-doers never prosper*"[1]

Ibn al-Jawzi narrates another personal experience of the same nature

"Once I acted on a legal opinion which was upheld by certain schools of jurisprudence but rejected by others. However, I felt an uneasiness as if I had committed a sacrilege which was causing me spiritual contraction and a drift towards unorthodoxy With a deepening sense of bereavement and sullenness, I realised as if my own Self was asking me 'You didn't act against the advice of the jurists Why is then this feeling of privation?" I replied 'O my insinuating Self, I have two answers to thy question. First, thou turned aside from the teachings of thy own juristic school If thou had been asked to pronounce a legal opinion on this question, thou wouldst not have advised it thus' 'I won't have acted on it', interjected the Self, 'if I had not considered it lawful.' I replied: 'No, thou wouldst not even advise others to act likewise.' 'And the second reason is,' I added, 'that thou shouldst be happy over the gloom experienced by thee, for had thou not been already favoured with the illumination thou wouldst not have had this feeling of bereavement.' 'But I dislike the gloom coming over me,' replied the Self 'Then thou shouldst make up thy mind,' said I, 'to give up the disputed act Thou thinkest that it has been made lawful through consensus of opinion Still thou shouldst decide to renounce it simply for the fear of God' The Self was then saved of the spiritual contraction and gloominess after it had acted likewise."[2]

Biographical Studies :

Ibn al-Jawzi was primarily a traditionist and jurist but he

1 *Said al-Khatir*, Vol II, pp 283-285
2 *Ibid*, Vol II, p 304

always emphasised the importance of the study of biographical accounts of the pious and saintly masters of the olden times for the purpose of purification of soul and implanting a religious zeal He has advised the scholars, jurists and traditionists in the *Talbis-o-Iblis* and the *Said al-Khatir* to pursue this branch of learning Speaking of his own experience in this regard, he writes in the *Said al-Khatir*

> "I feel that the study of juristic sciences and Traditions is not sufficient to instil a tenderness of heart which enables it to attract the divine grace The only way to acquire this faculty is to study the inspiring biographies of the masters who were pure of heart The knowledge pertaining to the lawful and unlawful matters does not produce the warmth and tenderness of heart This is brought about by effective incidents narrated in the Traditions and the biographical accounts of the mentors of yore Those teachers of the olden times had realised the true content of faith and lived up to it instead of simply acquiring a knowledge of it What I am recommending to you is my personal experience I have seen that the traditionists and their students generally devote their entire attention to the chain of narrators and the canons framed for the reception or rejection of the Traditions Similarly, the jurists are extremely fond of the science of dialectics for gaining a victory over their opponents. How can these make one tender-hearted? Formerly the people used to visit the men of God to pattern their behaviour after the example set by these pious souls instead of acquiring knowledge from them And, indeed, this is the end of knowledge Therefore, let it be understood very clearly that it is absolutely necessary for you to include the study of the biographies of the pious and revered souls in your curriculum of the Law and the Traditions "[1]

1 *Said al-Khatir*, Vol II, pp 302-303,

Biographical Writings:

Ibn al-Jawzi has accordingly written the biographies of a number of luminaries such has Hasan al-Basri, Caliph ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbdul ᶜAziz, Sufyān Thauri[1], Ibrahim ibn Ad'ham,[2] Bishr Hāfi[3], Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Maᶜrūf Karkhi[4] and others[5] In addition to these biographies, he has also written a compendium of reputed scholars, writers, saints, etc. in four volumes under the title of *Sifat us-Safwah* This book is really a revised edition of the *Hilyatul Auliya* by Abū Nuaᶜim Asbahāni which was edited by Ibn al-Jawzi In revising the book he has kept in view the principles of historical criticism and deleted the spurious accounts related by Abū Nuaᶜim.

Study of History:

Ibn al-Jawzi held the view that along with the study of religious sciences like the Law and the Traditions, History should also be studied by the students because the lack of knowledge in this branch of learning had led certain scholars to commit unpardonable mistakes. He, therefore, advised that every student should have at least as much knowledge of history that he does not commit any grevious mistake. Writes he in the *Said al-Khatir*:

> "A scholar-jurist must be conversant with all the related sciences A jurist has to have the knowledge of other sciences like History, Traditions, Lexicology, etc. on which he has very often to rely upon. I heard a jurist saying that Sheikh Shibli and Cadi Shuraik had once got together in a meeting. I wondered at the ignorance of the jurist who did not know that the two were not contemporaries. Another scholar once said in a lecture that since Caliph

1 d 161, A H /778 A D
2 d 165 A H /782 A D
3 d 227 A H /841 A D
4. d. 200 A H /818 A D
5 Ibn al-Jawzi has made a mention of these books in *Said al-Khatir*, (*vide* Vol I, pp 137, 154, 175, Vol II, p 363 and Vol III, pp 562, 604, and 606) Out of these the first two have been published

ʿAlı had bathed the dead boby of Fatıma, theır marrıage dıd not termınate even after the death of the latter I thought, God may help thıs man, for he does not know that Calıph ʿAlı had marrıed the nıece of Fatıma, Umamah bınt Zaınab, after Fatıma had passed away How would ıt have been possıble ıf theır marrıage had contınued after the death of Fatıma? I have seen sımılar grevıous mıstakes committed by al-Ghazalı in the *Ihyā' ʿUlūm ıd-Dın.* I was surprısed to see how he could mıx up the ıncıdents happenıng at quite dıfferent tımes I have compıled all such errors of *Iyhā'* ın one of my books Another scholar, Sheıkh Abul Maʿalı al-Jawa'ını has mentıoned another curıous story ın hıs book entıtled *Ash-Shāmıl*, on the subject of jurısprudence He wrıtes that certaın Batınites have related that Hallāj, Abū Saʿıd al-Janābı Qarmatı and Ibn al-Muqannʿa had conspıred to overthrow the then government by creatıng dıssatısfactıon among the masses Each one of them undertook to raıse ınsurrectıon ın a certaın country and ın accordance wıth that agreement al-Janābı went to Ahs'a, Ibn al-Muqannʿa to Tarkıstan and Hallāj to Baghdad The two confidants of Hallāj, were, however, of the opınıon that he would surely lose hıs lıfe because ıt was not possıble to dupe the people of Baghdad If the narrator of thıs story only knew that Hallāj was not a contemporary of Ibn al-Muqannʿa, he would not have gıven credence to thıs story Mansūr had ordered the executıon of Ibn al-Muqannʿa ın 144 A H whıle Abū Saʿıd al-Janābı Qarmatı came to promınence ın 286 A H and Hallāj was kılled ın 309 A H Thus Qarmatı and Hallāj were almost contemporaneous but Ibn al-Muqannʿa was born much earlıer There ıs thus no questıon of the three meetıng and conspırıng together

Thıs would amply make ıt clear that every scholar should have a groundıng ın the scıences related to hıs own. It ıs dıscredıtable for a traditıomst that he should not be able to gıve a legal opınıon ın any mattei sımply because

he has been engrossed in the study of Traditions and has no time to pay attention to other branches of religious learning Similarly, it does not behove a jurist to be unable to explain the meanings of any Tradition. I implore God that He may endow us with an ambition that may not allow us to put up with the least indolence."[1]

Historical Writings :

Ibn al-Jawzi did not merely criticise the scholars for not being well versed in history, but he also wrote a comprehensive history of Islamic peoples from the inception of Islam till 574 A H in ten volumes In this work entitled as *al-Muntazam fi-Tārīkh il-Mulūk wal-Umam* Ibn al-Jawzi first gives the year and then narrates the important incidents and events of that year along with the pre-eminent personages who died during the year, followed by an account of their achievements. This work of Ibn al-Jawzi thus combines chronicle with scientific history interwoven with a harmonious account of the notable personalities [2]

Another historical work of smaller size by Ibn al-Jawzi is *Talqīh-o-Fuhūm-i-Ahl-il-Athar Fi-ʿAyūn Al-Tārīkh Wa-Sayar.* This is a compendium of historical information which has also been published [3]

Oratory of Ibn al-Jawzi :

The chroniclers of his time agree that Ibn al-Jawzi was a gifted orator who could draw large crowds In the *Said al-Khatir* he has mentioned his internal struggle which once almost prevailed upon him to pay absolutely no attention to the rhetoric and the choice of words in his speeches as this could be construed as a show of oratory However, he gave up the idea since on further reflection he came to the conclusion that eloquence was a

1 *Said al-Khatir*, Vol III, pp 604-606

2 The last five volumes of this book have been published by Dairat ul-Maʿārif, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India

3 Published by Syed Muhammad Yūsuf of Tonk, India

God given gift, a perfection and not a defection, which ought to be employed for the propagation of faith Similarly, Ibn al-Jawzi entertained a desire, more than once, to give up preaching and withdraw himself to a life of complete seclusion and meditation However, he won over his self to follow the right path by arguing the issue with it He ultimately decided that this was a suggestion hinted at by the Satan who did not like to see thousands of persons carried away by his eloquence towards the path of moral and spiritual reformation The prophets of God were primarily preachers and they also associated with the people The self of the man being indolent and abhoring exertion wants to turn its back upon the world It is also tempted by the love of fame, honour and popularity which can easily be gained through winning over the hearts of the people by retiring from the world Thus Ibn al-Jawzi reasoned with his Self to counter the whisperings of the Satan who wanted him to abandon his mission of preaching and inviting people towards the path of divine guidance Ibn al-Jawzi thus continued to press his intellectual gifts for more than half a century to the task of serving his people and revivification of the faith

Ibn al-Jawzi died on a Friday night in 597 A H The entire population of Baghdad suspended its work to attend his funeral prayers which was held in the mosque of (Jamᶜa) Mansūr It was a memorable day in the history of the metropolis, innumerable people were found sobbing for the departed teacher The annalyist reports that quite a few inhabitants of Baghdad spent their nights throughout the ensuing month of Ramadhan at his grave offering prayers and reciting the Qurᵓān for the peace of his soul

CHAPTER X

NUR UD-DIN ZANGI AND SALAH UD-DIN AYYUBI

The Crusaders :

The commonwealth of Islam was devoting its attention to the educational and intellectual pursuits, on the one hand, while Christendom was consolidating its might to wipe off the entire Islamic world, on the other Europe had been nourishing an intense hatred for Islam ever since the Arabs had taken their arms to the eastern possessions of the Byzantine empire All the holy places of Christendom including the birth-place of Jesus Christ were under the Muslims This afforded, by itself, a sufficient cause to Europe for breathing vengeance on Islam but the existence of powerful Islamic States and then continued inroads into the Christian countries did not give them the heart to covet the Muslim territories However, the downfall of the Seljukid empire and the unsettled conditions in Asia Minor and Syria towards the end of the fifth century A H were in many respects calculated to favour the success of Europe At the same time, the Christendom got a wandering preacher in the person of Peter the Hermit who distinguished himself by his fiery zeal and ability to carry away by his eloquence thousands of the poor Christians from one corner of Europe to another Apart from these, numerous other factors, social and economic, contributed to surround the religious venture of the Crusaders with a hallow of romance tainted with avarice, ambition and lust.[1]

The first eastward march of the Crusaders towards Syria commenced in 490 A H ; within two years the great cities of

1. For detailed account of these reasons *see* EBR, Vol VI, Art "Crusades."

Edessa and Antioch and many fortresses were captured and by 492 A H the Christians had regained possession of Jerusalem itself Within a few years the greater part of Palestine and the coast of Syria, Tortosa, Acre, Tripolis and Sidon fell into the hands of the Crusaders "The Crusaders penetrated like a wedge between the old wood and the new", says Stanley Lane-Poole, "and for a while seemed to cleave the trunk of Mohammedan empire into splinters "[1] The capture of Jerusalem threw the fanatical horde of Crusaders into a frenzy which gave rein to their wildest passions a savagery which their own writers are ashamed to confess, and unable to deny Here is a graphic account of the massacre of Muslims after the fall of Jerusalem

> "So terrible, it is said, was the carnage which followed that the horses of the crusaders who rode up to the mosque of Omar were knee-deep in the stream of blood Infants were seized by their feet and dashed against the walls or whirled over the battlements, while the Jews were all burnt alive in the synagogue "
>
> "On the next day the horrors of that which had preceded it were deliberately repeated on a larger scale Tancred had given a guarantee of safety to 300 captives In spite of his indignant protest these were all brought out and killed, and a massacre followed in which the bodies of men, women and children were hacked and hewn until their fragments lay tossed together in heaps The work of slaughter ended, the streets of the city were washed by Saracen prisoners "[2]

The fall of Jerusalem marks the beginning of the decline of Islamic power and the increasing strength of the Christian West which was successful in due course in establishing four Latin Kingdoms of Jerusalem, Edessa, Antioch and Tripoli in the territory bordering the eastern end of the Mediterranean from the Euphrates to Egypt, exposing the entire world of Islam to the

1 *Saladin*, p 25
2 EBR, Vol VI, p 627

danger of annihilation The ambition of the warriors of the Cross ran so high that Reginald of Chatillon once expressed the desire to cross over to Arabia with the fell design of sacking Mecca and Madina and taking the corpse of the blessed Prophet out of his grave![1] Never after the rising of the Apostates following the death of the Prophet had Islam been exposed to such a grave danger. The existence of Islam being at stake for the second time in its history, it had to take the field for a decisive battle with the Latin West.

The opening decades of the sixth century A H. marked the dissension of the Islamic East After the death of Malik Shah, the last great Seljukid ruler, civil war broke out among his successors and the empire split into many separate principalities There was then no ruler who had the capacity to unify the forces of Islam in order to stand on the defensive against the increasing pressure from the north-west Stanley Lane-Poole has rightly said that.

> "It was a time of uncertainty and hesitation—of amazed attendance upon the dying struggles of a mighty empire; an interregnum of chaos until the new forces should have gathered their strength, in short, it was the precise moment when a successful invasion from Europe was possible"[2]

Atābek ʿImād ud-dīn Zangi:

At this critical moment, when the despair of the Muslims was at its height, a lucky star rose in the eastern horizon. As it had happened earlier, Islam got a champion for its cause from an unexpected quarter, who appeared on the scene to save the situation. Lane-Poole writes.

> "It was but necessary to preach the *Jihad*—the Holy War—and to show them a commander whose courage and military genius all must respect, and the Turkman chiefs and vassals would at once become a Church Militant with

1. *Saladin*, p 177
2. *Ibid.*, p 25

whom the Crusaders would have very seriously to reckon. The leader was found in Imād-ed-dīn Zengy."[1]

'Imād ud-dīn Zangi was the son of one of the court chamberlains of Malik Shah. Sultan Mahmūd conferred on him the government of Mosul along with the title of Atābek the Tutor of the Princes. After consolidating his power in Syria and Iraq, 'Imād ud-dīn advanced against Edessa (Roha) which was one of the strongest fortresses held by the Crusaders, and formed the centre of their aggressive inroads into the neighbouring territories held by the Muslims. 'Imād ud-dīn captured Edessa on the 6th of Jamadi ul-Akhir, 539 A H According to Arab historians it was the "conquest of conquests" for Edessa was regarded by the Christians as the "stoutest prop of the Latin Kingdom' The valley of the Euphratus was thus finally saved from the marauding excursions of the Crusaders Shortly after achieving this brilliant victory 'Imād ud-dīn was assassinated by a slave on the 5th of Rab'ī ut-Tham, 541 A H Thus perished one of the greatest heroes of Islam who had opened the way for a counter-attack on behalf of Islam against the Crusaders. However, the task left incomplete by the great Atābek was taken far ahead by his illustrious son al-Malik al-'Adil Nūr ud-dīn Zangi

Al-Malik al-'Adil Nūr ud-dīn Zangi :

Nūr ud-dīn Mahmūd[2] was now the Sultan of Aleppo on whom devolved the responsibility of the championship of Islam The constant aim of his efforts was the expulsion of the Latin Christians from Syria and Palestine and to this object he remained faithful throughout his life. For him *Jihād* with the Crusaders was the greatest act of piety crowned with the Divine blessing In 559 A. H. Nūr ud-dīn Zangi captured Hārim a stronghold of the Crusaders in the north after defeating the united armies of the Franks and the Greeks It is related that ten thousand Christians were slain in this battle and innumerable Crusaders

1. *Saladin*, p 34.
2 Known to the West as Noradinus

were taken prisoners along with the most of their chieftains, such as Bohemond, Prince of Antioch, Raymond of the court of Tripoli, Joscelin III, and the Greek general, Duke of Calamar. Soon after it the fortress of Banias[1] (Cæsarea Philippi) at the foot of Mount Hermon, fell before the arms of Nūr ud-dīn, encircling the Crusaders from two sides The significance of this political change has been described thus by Lane-Poole

> "The possession of the Nile by Nūr-ed-dīn's general (Salāh ud-dīn) placed the Kingdom of Jerusalem as it were in a cleft stick, squeezed on both sides by armies controlled by the same power The harbours of Demietta and Alexandria gave the Moslems the command of a fleet, and enabled them to cut off the communications of the Crusaders with Europe, stop the annual pilgrim ships and sieze their supplies."[2]

Nūr ud-dīn had thus practically outmanoeuvered the Crusaders in Palestine but his greatest ambition was to drive them out of Jerusalem This was, however, to be accomplished by Salāh ud-dīn but its foundation was laid by the departing sovereign, Nūr ud-dīn, who died in 569 A H., in his fifty-sixth year, of a disease of quinsy The news of the death of Nūr ud-dīn, writes Lane-Poole, "fell like a thunderbolt among the Saracens"

Character of Nūr ud-dīn :

Muslim historians describe Nūr ud-dīn as a chivalrous, just and generous ruler, most tender-hearted, pious and high-minded, and a fearless warrior ready to expose himself in the front of every battle True to his name 'Mahmūd' he was acclaimed as one of the best of the kings, as the historians tell us, he was more capable and enlightened than his predecessors

Ibn al-Jawzi who was a contemporary of Nūr ud-dīn, writes of him in *al-Muntazam*:

> "Nūr ud-dīn marched upon the enemy at the frontiers of his realm and succeeded in regaining more than 50 towns

1 *Saladin*, p 84 and *Al-Kāmil*, Vol. XI, p 124,
2 *Saladin*, p 103

from the infidels. He led a life better than most of the kings and sultans Peace and tranquillity reigned in his kingdom There is, in fact, a lot to be said in his praise He always considered himself as a subordinate of the Caliph at Baghdad Before he died he abolished all oppressive and illegal imposts within his territories He was extremely simple in his habits and loved the pious and scholars."[1]

Another historian, Ibn Khallikān, who is known for his objective assessment of the characters and events says

> "He was a just and pious king, always eager to follow the observances prescribed by the *Shariᶜah* and a generous patron of scholars in whom he took great interest He was distinguished for his keen desire to take part in the *Jehād*, he spent his income on the pious foundations and welfare of the poor, and had set up educational institutions in all the principal cities of Syria It is difficult to enumerate all of his qualities or the monuments by way of public works left by him "[2]

Ibn al-Athir, the reputed historian and author of the *Tarikh al-Kāmil*, writes

> "I have studied the careers of the rulers of the past but excepting the first four Caliphs and ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbdul ᶜAzīz there has been no prince so liberal and pious, law-abiding and just (as Nūr ud-din)."[3]

Ibn al-Athir's testimony carries a special weight because he was in his fourteenth year when Nūr ud-din died. He writes about the character and disposition of Nūr ud-din as follows

> "He met his personal expenses from the property he had acquired out of the proceeds of his own share in the booty taken in war He had set apart three shops situated in Hams which fetched an annual rent of 20 *Dinars* for meeting his household expenses Once, when his wife

1 *Al-Muntazam*, Vol X, pp 248-249
2 Ibn-Khallikān, Vol IV, p. 272
3 *Al-Kāmil*, Vol IX, p 163

complained to him that the income from the shops was insufficient; he dryly replied 'I have nothing more to give you Whatever else you see, I hold in sacred trust for the Muslims and I am no more than their trustee. I would not like to be consigned to Hell for your sake by spending anything on ourselves out of the public funds.'

"He used to devote a greater part of his time after the nightfall in prayers. Belonging to the Hanafite school, he had studied jurisprudence and the Traditions but the narrow dogmatism was entirely foreign to his character

"He was distinguished for his remarkable love for justice which could be seen, for example, in the fact that he had abolished all customs, dues and tithes throughout his vast kingdom comprising Egypt, Syria and Mosul He was always eager to observe, in exact details, the disciplines and injunctions of the *Shari'ah* Once he was summoned to appear before a court He sent the word to the Cadi that no preferential treatment should be accorded to him when he appeared before the court as a defendant. Although he won the case against the plaintiff, he gave up his claim in favour of his opponent saying 'I had already decided to do so, but I thought that perhaps my vanity wanted me to avoid attending the court of law I, therefore, decided to appear before the court and now I give up what has now been decided in my favour' He had set up a special tribunal known as *Dar-ul-'Adl* (House of Justice) where he along with a Cadi, personally heard the cases to check arbitrariness on the part of high officials, princes, etc.

"On the battle-field he earned the admiration of everyone by his personal bravery He always took two bows and quivers to the battle-field. Once somebody said to him· 'For God's sake, don't expose to danger your own self as well as Islam.' 'Who is Mahmūd', retorted Nūr ud-din, 'that you speak thus of him? Who defended the country and Islam before me? Verily, there is no defender save Allah.'

"He held the scholars in high esteem and always stood up to receive them. He took keen interest in their affairs and patronised them with generous gifts but despite his humility and simplicity, he had such a commanding personality that the people were seized with fright in his presence The fact is that it is not possible to relate all his qualities in the limited compass of this book"

Unflinching Faith :

Nūr ud-dīn had set his heart on the expulsion of the Crusaders from the holy land. He had also an unflinching faith in his mission and a firm conviction that he would ultimately succeed in his endeavour

Nūr ud-dīn had to suffer a defeat at Hisn al-Akrād in 558 A H, when he was taken unawares by the Christians[2] Soon thereafter he was making camp near Hams, a few miles from the enemy encampment Some of his well-wishers counselled Nūr ud-dīn that it was not advisable to remain so near the enemy after suffering a defeat. Nūr ud-dīn, however, bade them to keep quiet and said "I won't care for the enemy if I had only a thousand horses with me. By God, I would not go under a roof till I have taken revenge from the enemy." Even after the defeat Nūr ud-dīn continued with his generous grants to the learned, the poor and godly persons When it was suggested to him that the amount earmarked for charitable purposes might be diverted for strengthening the forces at that critical juncture, Nūr ud-dīn replied angrily "But I hope the succour of God only on account of their benedictions and prayers The Holy Prophet has said that Allah causes sustenance and His help to come down on earth only for the sake of the poor and the oppressed How can I desist from helping those who fight for me when I am fast asleep And lo! they never miss their targets, yet, you want me to help those who fight only when they see me in their midst

1 *Al-Kāmil*, Vol XI, pp 163-164
2 *Ibid*, Vol XI, p 119

on the battle-field, and they often succeed or fail in their endeavours. The poor have a right to derive benefit from the public revenues and so how can I ask them to forgo what is due to them ?"[1]

Nūr ud-dīn made preparations to avenge his defeat he distributed large sums to his followers, sent letters to all the chiefs and governors for sending fresh levies, and, at the same time, requested the pious and devoted to pray for his success His efforts created a new upsurge throughout his vast dominion to fight the Crusaders for the defence of Islam Nūr ud-dīn met the united armies of the Franks and the Greeks, and in one of the severest battles which took place under the walls of Hārim, he achieved a splendid victory over his foes which gave him control over Hārim and a few other fortresses [2]

The unflinching faith of Nūr ud-dīn can well be imagined by an incident reported by the historians While he was laying a seige to Banias (Cæsarea Philippi), his brother, Nusrat ud-dīn lost an eye Nūr ud-dīn, on meeting his brother, said "If you only knew the divine reward for losing your eye, you would ardently desire to lose the other one too "[3]

Salah ud-dīn Ayyūbi :

Salah ud-dīn was, in truth and reality, a standing miracle of the Prophet of Islam and a manifest sign of the truthfulness and authenticity of his message.

1 *Al-Kāmil* Vol XI, p 119
2 *Ibid*, Vol XI, pp 122-123
3 *Ibid*, Vol XI, p 123
4 Salah ud-dīn Ayyūbi was not a descendant of Abū Ayyūb Ansari, the famous companion of the Prophet Salah ud-dīn called himself Ayyūbi after the name of his father, Ayyūb who was a Kurd belonging to eastern Azarbaijan It seems that his grandfather had migrated to Baghdad with his two sons Ayyūb Najm ud dīn and Sherkoh Asad ud-dīn and thereafter settled in Takrait where he died Ayyūb and Sherkoh entered into state service under Mujahid ud-dīn Bahroz, the police chief under Sultan Mas'ūd Ayyūb Najm ud-dīn later got an employment under 'Amad ud-dīn Zangi who made him the custodian of a castle in Balbek

Salah ud-dın was brought up like other Kurd youths of moderate means,[1] studying the coventional sciences and the art of warfare Nobody could have predicted before Salah ud-dın captured Egypt and confronted the Crusaders, that this young man would one day emerge as the conqueror of Jerusalem and a great Defender of the Faith, and that he would achieve such an eminence as to be looked upon by posterity as a brilliant example for his ardent zeal and courage in fighting the infidels, or, for his sterling virtues which could rightly be envied even by the most pious and pure in heart Describing the youthful days of Salah ud-dın, Lane-Poole says

> "As the favoured governor's son, he naturally enjoyed a privileged position, but, far from exhibiting any symptoms of future greatness, he was evidently a shining example of that tranquil virtue which shuns 'the last infirmity of the noble minds' "[2]

God had, however, destined him to become the most renowned leader of his time, and when God wills a thing He provides the means therefor · His master Nūr ud-dın ordered him to proceed to Egypt Cadı Baha' ud-dın ibn Shaddād, a trusted councilor of Salah ud-dın, writes that the latter had confessed it to him that he had gone to Egypt dragged against his will, like one driven to his death It was the fulfilment of what the Qur'ān says *But it may happen that ye hate a thing which is good for you, and it may happen that ye love a thing which is bad for you*[3]

Transformation of his life :

Sahab ud-dın was, however, completely a changed man after assuming power in Egypt Conviction dawned upon him that God had to take some work from him which would be thwarted by the pursuits of pleasure

Ibn Shaddād is on record that "no sooner did he assume the over-lordship of Egypt, the world and its pleasures lost all

1 *Saladin* p 72

2. *Ibid*, p 72

3 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultania*, p 31 (Italics Quotation from the Qur'ān, *Al-Baqarah*, 216)

significance in his eyes. With a heart-felt sense of gratitude for the favour bestowed by God on him he gave up drinking, renounced the temptations of pleasure, and took to the life of sweat and toil which went on increasing with the passage of time "[1] Lane-Poole too has the same story to tell

He says

"On his side, Saladin began to order his life more rigorously Devout as he had always shewn himself, he became even more strict and austere He put aside the thought of pleasure and the love of ease, adopted a Spartan rule, and set it as an example to his troops. He devoted all his energies henceforth to one great object—to found a Moslem empire strong enough to drive the infidels out of the land 'When God gave me the land of Egypt,' said he, 'I was sure that He meant Palestine for me also' It may well be that natural selfish ambition quickened his zeal, but the result was the same. thenceforward his career was one long championship of Islam He had vowed himself to the Holy War "[2]

Zeal for Jehad:

The constant aim of his efforts was to fight in the way of God. Describing the zeal of Salah ud-dīn for *Jehād*, writes Ibn Shaddād·

"Fired with the zeal to wage war against the Crusaders, *Jehād* was the most favourite topic of his discussion, he was always seen making his dispositions for the strengthening of his forces, seeking out men and materials for the same purpose and paying attention to anyone who spoke about these matters to him He had gladly abandoned for its sake his hearth and home, family and children, and betaken to the life of the camp where a wind could uproot his tent. Anybody encouraging him in his ambitions could easily win his confidence "[3]

1. *Al-Nawadir-i-Sultania*, pp 32-33
2 *Saladin*, p 99.
3 *Al-Nawadir-i-Sultania*, p, 17

"One could make a solemn affirmation that after he started the war against the Crusaders he never spent a single shell on anything save on the preparation for war and helping his men "[1]

Ibn Shaddād continues

"The Sultan appeared to be like a bereaved mother on the battle-field, who had been deprived of her only child by the cruel hands of Death He could be seen trotting on his horse from one end of the battle-field to another, exhorting the people to fight for the sake of Allah He would himself go round all the detachments, with tears in his eyes, asking people to come forth for the aid of Islam "[2]

The same writer describes how Salah ud-din spent his days during the siege of Acre.

"Excepting a sweet-drink for which his physician insisted, the Sultan did not take anything for the whole day[3]

"The royal physician told me that the Sultan had taken only a few morsels of food from Friday to Sunday as he was unable to pay attention to anything save the happenings on the battle-field "[4]

Battle of Hittīn:

After a series of fights and forays a hotly-contested battle was fought in the neighbourhood of Tiberias beneath the hills of Hittin,[5] on Saturday, the 24th of Rabi ul-Akhir, 583 A H, which gave a death-blow to the power of the Crusaders The victory achieved by the Sultan has been described thus by Lane-Poole

"The flower of chivalry was taken The king and his brother, Reginald of Chatillon, Joscelin of Courtenay,

1 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultania*, p 16
2 *Ibid*, p 155
3 *Ibid*, p 155
4 *Ibid*, p 90
5 Hittīn is the place named by tradition as the scene of Christ's sermon on the mount

Humphrey of Toron, the Masters of the Temple and Hospital, and many other nobles were among the prisoners The rest of the chivalry of Palestine was under Moslem warders Of the rank and file, all who were alive were made prisoners A single Saracen was seen dragging some thirty Christians he had himself taken, tied together with a tent-rope. The dead lay in heaps, like stones upon stones, among broken crosses, severed hands and feet, whilst mutilated heads strewed the ground like a plentiful crop of melons [1]

"The field long bore the marks of the bloody fight where '30,000' Christians were said to have fallen. A year afterwards the heaps of bleaching bones could be seen from afar, and the hills and valleys were strewn with the relics of the horrid orgies of wild beasts "[2]

Religious Ardour of the Sultan :

The fateful fight at Hittin came to a close with an incident which is symptomatic of Sultan Salah ud-din's fiery zeal for the religion This is how Lane-Poole describes it .

"Saladin camped on the field of battle. When his tent was pitched, he ordered the prisoners to be brought before him. The King of Jerusalem and Reginald of Chatillon he received in his tent; he seated the King near himself, and seeing his thirst, he gave him a cup of water iced in snow. Guy drank and passed the cup to the lord of Karak: but Saladin was visibly annoyed. 'Tell the king,' he said to the interpreter, 'that it was he, not I, that gave that man drink' The protection of 'bread and salt' was not to baulk his vengeance. Then he rose and confronted Reginald, who was still standing: 'Twice have I sworn to kill him; once when he sought to invade the holy cities, and

1. *Saladin*, p 214
2. *Ibid* , p. 215

again when he took the caravan by treachery.[1] Lo! I will avenge Mohammed upon thee!" And he drew his sword and cut him down with his own hand, as he had sworn The guard finished it and dragged the body out of the tent; and God sped his soul to Hell.

"The King, trembling at the sight, believed his own turn was now coming, but Saladin reassured him: 'It is not the custom of kings to slay kings; but that man had transgressed all bounds, so what happened, happened'"[2]

Ibn Shaddād's version of Reginald of Chatillon's execution adds that Salah ud-din offered him the choice of Islam and on his refusal cut off his head The Sultan said: "Lo! I avenge Muhammad, (peace and blessings of God be upon him) upon thee.'[3]

Conquest of Jerusalem:

The victory at Hittin was but the prelude to the much coveted conquest of Jerusalem by Salah ud-din. The intense desire of Salah ud-din for regaining the holy city has been starkly depicted by Ibn Shaddād who says that "the Sultan was so keen for Jerusalem that the hills would have shrunk from bearing the burden he carried in his heart."[4]

On Friday, the 27th of Rajab. 583 A.H, the day of the Prophet's Ascension,[5] when he had led the congregational prayer of

1 Ibn Shaddād adds that when the caravan of pilgrims was treacherously waylaid by Reginald, some of his captives implored him to be merciful Reginald, however, arrogantly turned down their request saying: "Ask your Prophet Muhammad to come to your rescue". When Salah ud-din heard of it he vowed that he would slay Reginald with his own hands, if he got hold of him

2 *Saladin*, pp 214-215

3 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultania*, p 64

4. *Ibid*, p 213

5. The miraculous event of the journey of Holy Prophet to Heaven has been alluded to in the Qur'ān (XVII - 1) which runs as follows: "Glorified be He who carried His servant by night from the Inviolable Place of Worship (Ka'aba) to the Far Distant Place of Worship (the Temple of Jerusalem) the neighbourhood where of We have blessed, that We might show him of

"If the taking of Jerusalem were the only fact known about Saladin, it were enough to prove him the most chivalrous and great-hearted conqueror of his own, and perhaps of any, age "[1]

The Third Crusade:

The fall of Jerusalem and the terrible rout of the Crusaders at the battle of Hittin threw the whole of Christendom into a violent commotion Reinforcements from Europe poured forth into Palestine Almost all the principal sovereigns and eminent generals of the then Christendom, such as, Frederick Barbarossa, the Emperor of Germany, Richard Cœr de Lion, King of England, and Philip Augustus, King of France, Leopold of Austria, the Duke of Burgundy, the Count of Flanders sallied forth with their armies against the lonely Sultan and his few chiefs and relatives who had to defend the honour of Islam

Negotiations of Peace:

Both the parties which had been arrayed against each other in a sanguinary combat for five years at last got tired of the fruitless, harassing and decimating struggle. They came to an agreement at Ramla in 588 A H which recognised Salah ud-din as the sovereign of the whole of Palestine leaving the principality of Acre in the hands of the Christians Thus ended the Third Crusade and with it the task entrusted to Salah ud-din by God Lane-Poole describes the inglorious end of the Third Crusade in these words

"The Holy War was over, the five years' contest ended Before the great victory at Hittin in July, 1187, not an inch of Palestine west of the Jordan was in the Moslems' hands After the Peace of Ramla in September, 1192, the whole land was theirs, except a narrow strip of coast from Tyre to Jaffa Saladin had no cause to be ashamed of the treaty. The Franks indeed retained most

1 *Saladin*, pp 233-234

of what the Crusaders had won, but the result was contemptible in relation to the cost At the Pope's appeal, all Christendom had risen in arms The Emperor, the Kings of England, France, and Sicily, Leopold of Austria, the Duke of Burgundy, the Count of Flanders, hundreds of famous barons and knights of all nations, had joined with the King and Princes of Palestine and the indomitable brothers of the Temple and Hospital, in the effort to deliver the Holy City and restore the vanished kingdom of Jerusalem The Emperor was dead the Kings had gone back, many of their noblest followers lay buried in the Holy Land, but Jerusalem was still the city of Saladin, and its titular king reigned over a slender realm at Acre

"All the strength of Christendom concentrated in the Third Crusade had not shaken Saladin's power His soldiers may have murmured at their long months of hard and perilous service, year after year, but they never refused to come to his summons and lay down their lives in his cause His vassals in the distant valleys of the Tigris may have groaned at his constant requirements, but they brought their retainers loyally to his colours, and at the last pitched battle, at Arsuf, it was the division of Mosil that most distinguished itself for valour Throughout these toilsome compaigns Saladin could always count on the support of the levies from Egypt and Mesopotamia, as well as from northern and central Syria; Kurds Turkmans, Arabs, and Egyptians, they were all Moslems and his servants when he called In spite of their differences of race. their national jealousies, and tribal pride, he had kept them together as one host—not without difficulty and twice or thrice a critical waver But, the shrinking at Jaffa notwithstanding, they were still a united army under his orders in the autumn of 1192, as they had been when he first led them 'on the Path of God' in 1187. Not a province had fallen away, not a chief or vassal had rebelled, though the calls upon their loyalty and endurance were

the earlier prophets in Jerusalem, the Sultan entered the city

Ibn Shaddād has given a graphic account of this memorable day He writes

"It was the victory of victories A large crowd consisting of scholars and the nobles, traders and the laity had gathered on this joyous occasion A number of people had come from the coastal lands on getting the news of the Sultan's victory, and so had come nearly all the notable theologians from Egypt and Syria to congratulate him on his victory Hardly any dignitary or any noteworthy personage of the empire was left behind The joyful shouts of 'God is Great', and 'There is no god but God' rent the skies After ninety years Friday prayer was again held in Jerusalem The Cross that glittered on the Dome of the Rock was pulled down An undescribable event as it was, the blessings and the succour of God were to be witnessed every-where on the day "[1]

A costly pulpit which had been designed under the orders of Nūr ud-dīn Zangi twenty years ago was brought from Aleppo and erected in the Dome of the Rock [2]

Benevolence of Salah ud-dīn

The forbearance, humanity and magnanimity of Salah ud-dīn on this occasion was in striking contrast with the brutality of his Christian foes The Christian biographer of Salah ud-dīn, Lane-Poole, acknowledges that the Sultan's kindness of heart had conquered his desire for revenge He writes.

"Never did Saladin show himself greater than during this memorable surrender His guards, commanded by

Our tokens!" The Prophet was brought by the angel Gabrial to the Temple of Jerusalem where he offered the prayers, leading a congregation of all the prophets who had come before him. Thereafter, he was taken to the Heaven to be presented before God Almighty

1 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultania*, p 66

2 Abul Fida, Vol III p 77

responsible emirs, kept order in every street, and prevented violence and insult, insomuch that no ill-usage of the Christians was ever heard of Every exit was in his hands, and a trustee Lord was set over David's gate to receive the ransoms as each citizen came forth "[1]

Then, after describing how the people left in the holy city were ransomed and how al-Malik al-ʿAdil, the brother of the Sultan, the Patriarch and Balian of Ibelin, were each allowed to set free a thousand slaves given by Salah ud-din, Lane-Poole writes

"Then said Saladin to his officers 'My brother has made his alms, and the Patriarch and Balian have made theirs, now I would fain make mine' And he ordered his Guards to proclaim throughout the streets of Jerusalem that all the old people who could not pay were free to go forth And they came forth from the postern of St Lazarus, and their going lasted from the rising of the sun until night fell Such was the charity which Saladin did, of poor people without number "[2]

"Thus did the Saracens show mercy to the fallen city One recalls the savage conquest by the first Crusaders in 1099, when Godfrey and Tancred rode through streets choked with the dead and dying, when defenceless Moslems were tortured, burnt, and shot down in cold blood on the towers and roof of the Temple, when the blood of wanton massacre defiled the honour of Christendom and stained the scene where once the gospel of love and mercy had been preached 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy' was a forgotten beatitude when the Christians made shambles of the Holy City Fortunate were the merciless, for they obtained mercy at the hands of the Moslem Sultan

"The greatest attribute of heaven is Mercy,
And 't is the crown of justice, and the glory
Where it may kill with right, to save with pity

1 *Saladin*, p 230
2 *Ibid*, p 232

defray his burial expenses and it had to be met by obtaining a loan in his name, while the shroud was provided by his minister and amanuensis, Cadi Fādhil

The Saintly Sultan

In regard to the character and disposition of Salah ud-dīn, Ibn Shaddād has left the following record.

"In faith and practice the Sultan was a devout Musalman, ever conforming to the tenets of the orthodox school of faith He was regular in the performance of religious observances Once he told me. 'I have not performed a single congregational prayer alone for the past several years' Even during his illness he would send for the *Imām* and force himself to perform the prayer behind him Assiduous in offering the prayers founded on the practice of the Prophet, he also performed the voluntary prayers during the night If he could not somehow offer these supererogatory prayers during the night, he made up for these before the dawn prayers as allowed by the Shafe'ite school I have seen him standing behind the *Imām* during his last illness and except for the three days when he had fallen into a stupor, he never missed his prayers The poor-due could never become incumbent upon him since he never possessed, throughout his life, property of such estate and effects as was necessary to make him liable to pay that tax Boundless in generosity, he gave away whatever he possessed to the poor and needy, and, at the time of his death, no more than forty-seven *dirhams* of silver and one of gold were found in his possession He left no other property or goods

"He always kept the fast during the month of Ramadhan He had had to omit the fast once which he got noted down by Cadi Fādhil Before his last illness he scrupulously made up for this involuntary omission against the advice of his physician. 'I do not know when death will overtake me,' said he; and, true to his words, he gave up the ghost soon

after the repayment of that omission The Sultan ardently desired to accomplish the pilgrimage to Mecca but he could never get time to fulfil his desire During the year he died he had an intense desire to set-out for the pilgrimage but he could not somehow leave for it

"He delighted in hearing the Qur'ān recited to him and it was not unoften that he listened three or four chapters of the Holy Scripture from the battlement guards whom he sometimes visited during the night He listened the Qur'ān with all his heart and soul till tears trickled down his cheeks He had also a fancy for listening to the sacred Traditions He would ask everybody present to sit down and listen calmly while the Traditions were read out to him If any reputed Traditionist visited the town, he would himself go to attend his lecture, sometimes he would himself relate a Tradition, his eyes brimming with tears He would sometimes pause on the field of battle, between approaching armies, to listen the Traditions read out to him He held the tenets of faith so reverently that it was on his command that a heretical mystic, es-Suhrawardy, was got executed by his son al-Malik al-Zāhir

"The Sultan had an unflinching trust and confidence in the beneficence of Allah He used to turn with his heart and soul towards God in the moments of difficulty Once Sultan was present within Jerusalem which then lay almost helpless before the besieging Crusaders The Sultan had, however, refused our request to leave the city It was a cold wintry night before Friday when I was alone with the Sultan, we spent the whole night in prayers and supplication I requested the Sultan, late after mid-night to take a little rest but he replied 'I think you want to sleep Go and take a nap' After a short while when I went to him for dawn prayers, which we more often performed together, I found him washing his hands 'I didn't sleep at all,' said he After the prayer was over, I said, 'I have had an idea which may be of benefit to us. You should address

enough to try the firmest faith and tax the strength of giants The brief defection, quickly pardoned, of a young prince of his own blood in Mesopotamia only emphasises, by its isolation, Saladin's compelling influence over his subjects When the trials and sufferings of the five years' war were over, he still reigned unchallenged from the mountains of Kurdistan to the Libyan desert, and far beyond these borders the king of Georgia, the Catholicos of Armenia, the Sultan of Konia, the Emperor of Constantinople, were eager to call him friend and ally .

"To such allies he owed nothing· they came not to aid but to congratulate The struggle was waged by Saladin alone Except at the last, when his brother came prominently to the front, one cannot point to a single general or counsellor who can be said to have led, much less dominated, the Sultan A council of war undoubtedly guided his military decisions, and sometimes overruled his better judgement, as before Tyre and Acre, but in that council it is impossible to single out a special voice that weighed more than another in influencing his mind Brother, sons, nephews, old comrades, new vassals, shrewd Kady, cautious secretary, fanatical preacher,—all had their share in the general verdict, all helped their Master loyally according to their ability, but not a man of them ever forgot who was the Master In all that anxious, laborious, critical time, one mind, one will was supreme, the mind and the will of Saladin "[1]

Death of Salah ud-dīn

On Wednesday, the 27th of Safar, 589 A H died Salah ud-din, the faithful ally of Islam, after working his way up to the summit of his ambition, in the fifty-seventh year of his age [2] Thus describes

1 *Saladin*, pp 358-360
2 Abul Fida', Vol III, p 90

Ibn Shaddād the last days of Sultan Salah ud-dīn·

"It was in the night of the 27th of Safar, and the twelfth day since he fell ill, that the Sultan's illness took a serious turn He had become too weak by then Sheikh Abū Jaᶜfar, a pious and saintly person, was requested to stay within the castle during the night so that if the Sultan were to breathe his last, he might be available for recitation of the Quᵓān at the last moment It appeared as if the time of Sultan's eternal rest was drawing near Sheikh Abū Jaᶜfar was sitting by his bed-side, reciting the Holy Quᵓān while the Sultan lay unconscious for the last three days, regaining his consciousness only for brief intervals in-between When Sheikh Abū Jaᶜfar recited the verse *He is Allah than Whom there is no other God, the Knower of Invisible and the Visible*.[1] the Sultan opened his eyes and smiled, his face lighted up and he said joyfully, 'Verily, this is correct' No sooner had he uttered these words that his soul departed It was before dawn on Wednesday. the 27th of Safar when the Sultan passed away The day of his death was, for the Musalmans, a misfortune such as they had never suffered since they were deprived of the first four Caliphs The fort, the city and the entire world appeared to be lamenting over his death Whenever I was told earlier that sometimes people longed for offering their own lives for others, I thought it was just a figurative expression, but, I learnt, on the day the Sultan died, that it could really happen so I was one of those who would have then gladly parted with their lives if there had been the slightest possibility of saving the life of the Sultan by our sacrifice "[2]

Ibn Shaddād writes that the Sultan left nothing except one *dinar* and forty-seven *dirhams* when he died, nothing else did he leave by way of houses, or goods, or villages, or gardens, or any personal property[3] He had not left even as much that could suffice to

1. *Al-Hashr*, 22
2 *Il-Nawādir-i-Sultania* pp 249-250
3 *Ibid*, p 6 and *Saladin*, p 375

would have given away the last shell [1] The Sultan once cynically remarked that there were certain people for whom money and dust were alike "I know," says Ibn Shaddād, "that he was indirectly referring to his own views in this regard "[2]

The Sultan never allowed his visitor, even if he was a pagan, to leave him without a gift or some mark of recognition.[3] The ruler of Saida once paid a visit to the Sultan whom he welcomed with open arms The Sultan not only entertained him but also explained the tenets of Islam to him He regularly sent ice and fruits to Richard, his greatest foe, during the illness of the latter [4]

He was of so noble disposition and kind of heart that he could not see anyone in distress without being moved Once an old Christian woman came to him seeking her baby The old woman, screaming and in flood of tears, told the Sultan that her baby had been taken away from her tent by the dacoits She had been told, the woman said, that only he could help her to get her child back Touched by her lamentation the Sultan broke into tears and asked his men to find out from the slave market where her baby was After a short while her baby was brought back and the woman departed praying for the welfare of the Sultan [5]

Ibn Shaddād relates that the Sultan was very kind to the orphans Whenever he found such a child he entrusted him to someone or himself made arrangements for his up-bringing Similarly he was always grief-stricken to see the aged and infirm whom he considered to be his special charge [6]

Courage and Fortitude

During the siege of Acre, tells Ibn Shaddād, the Sultan had been overtaken by a painful illness which made it difficult for him

1 *Al-Nawādir-t-Sultania* p 13
2 *Ibid*, pp 13-14
3 *Ibid*, p 24
4 *Saladin*, p 355
5 *Al-Nawādir-t-Sultania* p 26
6 *Ibid* p 28 and *Saladin*, p 372

yourself to God Almighty and beseech Him for help' He asked, 'What should I do for that ?" 'Today 't is Friday,' said I, 'You should take bath before leaving for the ᶜAqsa Mosque and also make some offerings secretly by way of charity When you reach the mosque, offer a special prayer of two *rakᶜats* between the Call and congregational prayers, at the place where the Prophet had offered prayers during the Ascension I have read in a Tradition that the supplications made at that time are favoured with acceptance You should thereafter beseech God thus O my Lord, having lost all resources, I turn to Thee for help I now submit to Thee, for, Thou alone can help Thy faith to attain success at this critical juncture I hope that God shall accept your supplications' The Sultan did likewise I was by his side when I saw his head touching the ground in prostration and tears trickling down his beard on the prayer carpet I did not hear what was he beseeching unto the Lord but I witnessed the signs of his prayer being answered before the day was over Dissensions overtook the enemy camp from where we got heartening news for the next few days, till they broke their camp for Ramla by Monday morning."[1]

Character of Salah ud-dīn

A devout Muslim as he was, the dominant notes of his character were an acute sense of justice, charitableness, tenderheartedness, patience and courageousness

Ibn Shaddād writes that he held courts twice a week on each Monday and Tuesday, which were attended by the chiefs of state, scholars, jurists and Cadis. Great and small, everyone found the door open He used to read all the petitions and himself sign the orders dictated by him He never allowed anyone to leave him without meeting his requirement. At the same time he also kept himself busy in the recollection of God.

1 *Al-Nawādir-t-Sultania*, Abridged from pp 5-10

If anybody had any complaint to make, he would listen to him patiently and give his judgment Once a man lodged a complaint against Taqi ud-din, the Sultan's nephew, who was immediately summoned to the court for answering the charges On another occasion a man brought a suit against the Sultan himself who immediately made necessary investigations Although the claim of the person presenting the suit was not established, the Sultan granted him a robe of honour and a handsome grant before allowing him to leave the court

Kind and noble of heart, Salah ud-din was full of gentleness, patience and tenderness, and could never tolerate any injustice He always overlooked the mistakes of his associates and servants; if anything unpleasant was heard by him, he never allowed his annoyance to be betrayed to the person concerned Salah ud-din once asked for water which was somehow not procured for him He reminded five times for it and then said "I am dying of thirst" He drank the water which was brought thereafter without saying anything more[1] Another time when he wanted to take bath after a prolonged illness, he found the water too hot He asked for some cold water to be brought in The servant twice splashed the Sultan with cold water which caused him unpleasantness owing to his weakness but he simply said to the servant, "Tell me, if you want to get rid of me" The servant apologised and the Sultan instantly forgave him. Ibn Shaddād has narrated a number of other incidents exhibiting Salah ud-din's charity and goodness of heart

So generous and open-handed was he that sometimes he gave away the provinces conquered by him After he had conquered Āmad, one of his generals Qurrah Arslan expressed a desire for the city and the Sultan granted it to him[2] Sometimes he sold even his personal estates and effects for presenting a gift to his visitor The treasurers of the Sultan always used to keep a secret balance for the emergencies, for, left to himself, the Sultan

1 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultania*, p 21

2 *Ibid*, p 13

in 372 A H A man who was found in possession of the *Muwatta*[1] of Imām Mālik was punished.

"In 393 A H thirteen persons were punished for performing *Salat ul-Zuha*. Two vegetables, that is, water-cress and marsh-mellow were prohibited in 395 A. H. because Caliph Muawiyah and Ayeshah (the wife of the Prophet) were reported to have been fond of these. During the same year, curses and imprecations (upon the first three Caliphs and the Ummayyads), were ordered to be displayed prominently on the walls of all mosques, shrines and other public buildings. Wine was made lawful in 411 A H. by the Fatimide Caliph al-Zāhir l' Ayzaz Din-Illāh. On the one hand, tumultuous scenes of extravagant luxury, debauchery and drunkenness had become a common sight ; on the other, famine and disease were working havoc among the lesser folk During this period of the cruelest suffering people used to gather round the Royal castle and cry 'Hunger, Hunger'. The callous indifference of the rulers, at last, gave rise to pillage and plunder.

"In 424 A H when the heir-apparent to the Fatimide throne, who was then only four years of age, drove through the well-decorated bazars of the Capital, people prostrated themselves before him

"It had become almost a rule among the Fatimides to raise the children of tender age to the throne of Caliphate Mustansir b'Illah was of only seven years when he ascended the throne, Āmir b' Ahkam-Illāh of five years, one month and a few days, Alfayez b'Nasr-Illāh of five years and ʿAzid l' Din-Illāh of 11 years at the time of their being vested with the office of Caliphate."[2]

Rise of Salah ud-din to power in Egypt marks the beginning of an era when Shiaʿite creed began to vanish with the restoration

1 A collection of Traditions by Imām Mālik ibn Anas, the founder of one of the four juristic schools of Sunnīs

2 *Al-Maqrīzī*, Abbreviated from pp 352-359

of the spiritual authority of the orthodox Islam Schools were established in numerous places for the instruction of the masses Gradually all traces of heretical beliefs and practices which had been adopted by the people during the Fatimide rule of about three hundred years were effaced from Egypt The annalist of Egypt, al-Maqrizi, writes

> "The Shi'ah, Isma'iliyah and Imāmiyah creeds became so extinct that they have left no trace in the whole of Egypt"[2]

The Fatimide rule in Egypt was indeed a scourge for Islam During the three hundred years of its supremacy it continued to play a cruel joke with the tenets and doctrines, performances and practices enjoined by the Scripture and Traditions The orthodox school was looked down upon and its followers were persecuted, while the dissenters, sceptics and non-conformists preaching licentiousness and libertine conduct were elevated to the positions of power and authority Al-Maqdisi has summed up the achievements of the Fatimide rule in these words.

> "It was an affliction that Islam had to endure during the entire period of the 'Obaidite (Fatimide) rule It began in 299 A H and came to an end in 367 A H Shi'ahs came to have a dominant position under them, oppressive imposts and taxes were levied upon the people, the Shi'ahs, particularly those belonging to the Ismailiyah sect, had a corrupting influence on the beliefs and faith of the simple and impressionable people belonging to the hilly tracts of Syrian border as also of Nusayris and Daruziz tribes The Hashashim (or the hashish-eaters) were also one of the Isma'ilite sects The Isma'ilite preachers were successful among the above-mentioned tribes of the border areas owing to their ignorance and naivety, but they could not gain influence among other people It was during their reign that the Franks captured many Muslim cities in Syria and northern Iraq Their onslaught continued till the Atabeks

2 *Al-Maqrizi*, p 359

grace of God, he came out victorious killing quite a large number and taking as many prisoners [1] During the siege of Acre more than seventy enemy ship-loads of fighting men and munitions of war landed during an afternoon Everyone present on the occasion was perturbed except the Sultan In one of the most hotly-contested battles during this period, a fierce charge by the enemy threw back the Muslim troops into disorder The enemy rammaged the Muslim camp and even got into Salah ud-din's tent, pulling down the Royal banner, but Salah ud-din stood firm along with a few of his comrades and was quickly able to muster his soldiery to back him, turning the defeat into victory The enemy suffered a heavy and murderous defeat and withdrew leaving seven thousand of the dead on the battle-field [2] Ibn Shaddād relates how ambitious Salah ud-din was Once the Sultan said to him, "I shall tell you what is my heart's desire When God shall have put into my hands the whole of the Holy Land, I shall share my states with my children, leave them my last instructions, and bidding them farewell, embark upon the sea to subdue the western isles and lands I shall never lay down my arms while there remains a single infidel upon earth, at least if I am not stopped by death" [3]

Salah ud-dīn—A Scholar

Salah ud-din had a good grounding in the religious lore He was aware of not only all the Arab tribes and then genealogy but even the pedigree of famous Arab horses, which testifies to his wide knowledge of the history of Arabs. He was always keen of gathering information from his courtiers and associates [4] It has been reported by certain historians that he had also committed the *Hamasa*[6] to memory [5]

1 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultania*, p 15
2 *Ibid*, pp 15-16
3 *Ibid*, p 17
4 *Ibid*, p 27
7 A collection of Arabic poetry
6 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultania*, p 27

Writing about the youthful days of Salah ud-din, Lane-Poole says

> "To judge by later years, his literary tastes tended to the theological, he loved poetry indeed, but less than keen dialectic, and to hear holy traditions traced and verified, canon law formulated, passages in the Koran explained, and sound orthodoxy vindicated, inspired him with a strange delight "[1]

Collapse of Fatimides

Rise of Salah ud-udin signalled the fall of Fatimide[2] power which had established a separate Caliphate in Egypt It lasted for 266 years from 299 A H to 567 A H The Fatimides had introduced strange cults in the Islamic faith and practice changing its tenets and doctrines, rules of conduct and behaviour out of recognition A reputed historian al-Maqrizi has given a few examples of the orders promulgated by the Fatimides in his book *al-Khutat wal Athār* He writes

> "In 362 A H the law of inheritance was amended If a person left behind him a daughter along with a son or a nephew, or the uncle, the daughter excluded all others from succession Any violation of this law was treated as an evidence of enmity with Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet Visibility of the new moon for the beginning of a new month no longer remained necessary as the *Ramadhan* and *'Id* were ordered to be observed in accordance with the officially computed calendar
>
> *Tarawih* was banned throughout Egypt by a Roval edict

1 *Saladin*, pp 73-74

2 The Fatimides claimed thou descent from Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet but the historians are unanimous that they were not descendants of the Prophet The progenitor of the sect was either a converted Jew or Magian Cadi Abū Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Tayyab, Cadi 'Abdul Jabbar and al-Muqdisi have discussed the question in greater detail and reached the conclusion that the Fatimides were not in the lineage of the Prophet

came into power and a defender of Islam, as Salah ud-din was, came forward to crush their power. He regained the Islamic territories and saved the bondsmen of God from the Fatimide scourge."[1]

The revolutionary change brought about by Salah ud-din in Egypt was a harbinger of great religious and moral revival and, therefore, it is only natural that the historians of that period have expressed satisfaction over it Al-Maqdisi had himself witnessed the traces of a revolution that had transformed Egypt only 29 years before his birth The collapse of Fatimide rule finds expression in these words of al-Maqdisi:

"Their kingdom collapsed and with it ended the age of degradation for Islam"[2]

Another scholar of repute, Hafiz ibn Qayyim, has given an impressive account of the rise of the Batinites and their downfall at the hands of Nūr ud-dīn Zangi and Salah ud-dīn in his book *al-Sawayiq al-Mursalah*. He says:

"The teachings of the Batinites died a natural death in the East but it began gradually to gain ground in the West until it became a force, deeply entrenched, to be reckoned with They assumed the charge of a few cities in North Africa, from where they advanced to Egypt and succeeded in taking possession of that country They founded al-Kahira (modern Cairo) Their missionaries continued to enlist adherents and diffuse their esoteric cult It is they who produced the *Tracts of the Brethren of Purity*. Ibn Sina (Avicenna) wrote the *Isharat* and the *Shifa'* and certain other tracts under their influence, for he has himself acknowledged that his father was one of the missionaries of the Fatimide Caliph Hakim b'Illāh During the reign of the Fatimides the path of the Prophet became an impious blasphemy, the collections of the Traditions were proscribed and only a few remained who read these books or secretly

1. Al-Maqdisi, Vol I, p 201.
2 *Ibid*, Vol I p. 200.

acted on these precepts A dominant note of their teachings was that reason should be given precedence over revelation and the guidance of the apostles of God

"Gradually a greater part of the territories in North Africa, Egypt, Syria and Hijaz submitted to the Fatimide rule. Iraq also remained under their sway for about a year. *Sunnīs* were treated like *Zimmīs* under their rule; the Jews and the Christians at least enjoyed the security of life and property unknown to the *Sunnīs* Innumerable religious scholars were executed or expired in their dungeons

"At last God Almighty came to the rescue of the Muslims who were saved from the clutches of the Fatimides by Nūr ud-dīn and Salah ud-dīn Islam appeared to be at the verge of extinction in these countries but the revolution brought about by Salah ud-dīn granted a new lease of life to it Muslims were indeed overjoyed at this miraculous revivification of Islam at a time when people had begun to ask one another 'Who can now dare to defend the faith of God?' It was at such a moment that Allah enabled His bondsmen to get back Jerusalem from the Crusaders whom the defenders of Islam fought with indomitable courage and chivalry."[1]

The chronicles of the time show that the news of the fall of the Fatimide kingdom was generally received with a sense of relief and pleasure by the entire Islamic world and by the Muslims of Syria, in particular.[2]

Thus Salah ud-dīn stemmed the tide of the Crusaders which saved the world of Islam from the bondage and exploitation of western nations for centuries to come. On the other hand, he plugged a great source of evil by overthrowing the Fatimide Caliphate which was spreading the contamination of Batinite and Ismaʿīlite cults to other Muslim lands from its centre in Egypt The esoteric doctrines preached by these sects during the last two

1 Ibn Qayyim, Vol II, pp. 233-234

2 Al-Maqdisi, Vol I pp 198-199

or three centuries were responsible for the then prevailing intellectual waywardness and the degeneration of the faith and morals. The world of Islam cannot, indeed, forget either of these two achievements of Salah ud-dīn nor can any Muslim, living in any part of the world, ever fail to acknowledge his debt of gratitute to Sultan Salah ud-dīn Ayyubi

CHAPTER XI

SHEIKH UL-ISLAM IZZ UD-DIN IBN ABDUL SALAM

The heroic endeavours of Salah ud-din who set himself to work in the most earnest fashion with the re-introduction of orthodox doctrines of Islam in place of the Shia'ite creed, the chain of educational institutions started for the purpose all over his wide realm and, above all, the personal example set by him and some of the Muslim rulers in following the religious precepts and code of moral conduct redirected the energies of the people towards learning and teaching of the religious sciences. As a result thereof, we find several erudite scholars during the seventh century, who had devoted themselves, body and soul, to the dissemination of Islamic teachings among their compatriots. The most outstanding personage among these savants was Sheikh ul-Islam ʿIzz ud-din ibn ʿAbdul Salām (d. 660 A. H). Reputed for profound learning, piety and courage, he never compromised with the corrupting influences of his time and the degenerate ways of the then rulers

Erudition of ʿIzz ud-dīn :

ʿIzz ud-din ibn Abdul Salām was born in Damascus in 578 A H. He had the honour of being a student of several eminent scholars of those days such as Fakhr ud-din ibn ʿAsākir, Saif ud-din Amedi and Hafiz Abū Mohammad al-Qāsim According to certain annalists, he started education quite late but he soon acquired such a proficiency in the then sciences that his contemporaries have paid glowing tributes to his deep learning and brilliance of mind, Ibn Daqiq al-ʿId calls him *Sultan ul-ʿUlema* (king of scholars) in some of his works When ʿIzz ud-din

migrated to Egypt in 639 A. H., Hafiz ᶜAbdul ᶜAzim al-Munziri, the writer of *al-Targhib wat-Tarhib*, suspended giving legal-opinions When he was asked the reason for it, he said : "It does not behove any jurist to give legal-opinion where ᶜIzz ud-din happens to be present." Another scholar Sheikh Jamal ud-din ibn al-Hajib was of the opinion that in *Fiqah* (jurisprudence) ᶜIzz ud-din excelled even al-Ghazali,[1]

Al-Zahabi writes in his book entitled *al-ᶜEbar*

> "In his knowledge of *Fiqah*, devotion to religion and awe of God he had attained that degree of perfection which makes one capable of *Ijtihad* i e of interpreting the revealed law of God and of deducing new laws from it "[2]

ᶜIzz ud-dun occupied the chair of professor for a fairly long period in the *Madarsa Zawiyah Ghazaliyah* of Damascus along with holding the offices of *Khatib* and *Imam* in the principal mosque of the city called the Ummayyad Mosque. Sheikh Shahab ud-din Abu Shama relates that ᶜIzz ud-din vehemently opposed the innovations and later-day accretions like *Salat al-Raghayeb*[3] and the special prayers of mid-Shᶜaban[4] which had become so popular in his time that several scholars of note thought it prudent to keep silence about these

Al-Malik al-Kamil[5] insisted on ᶜIzz ud-din for accepting the office of Cadi in Damascus which he accepted reluctantly after imposing a number of conditions During the same period

1. *Tabqat al-Shafeᶜiyah* Vol V, p 83
2. Al-Suyuti, Vol I, p 141
3. *Salat al-Raghayeb* was a special prayer of 12 *Rakᶜats* performed in the night of the 27th Rajab. The people had somehow come to regard it as a highly meritorious prayer It came in vogue in 448 A H as described by ᶜIzz ud-din, *vide Ithaf us-Saᶜadah*, (Vol III, pp 423-424)
4. In the night of 15th Shaban a prayer of 100 Rakᶜats was performed in a manner specially prescribed for it Ibn Subki and Imam Nawavi, have held both these offerings to be detestable innovations (*Ithaf us-Saᶜadah*, Vol III, pp 425-427)
5. Son of Al-Malik al-ᶜAdil who held Egypt after the death of his father in 615 A. H

al-Malik al-Kāmil appointed him as his envoy to the court of the then ʿAbbāsid Caliph

Righteousness of ʿIzz ud-dīn:

Among the religious scholars of Syria, ʿIzz ud-dīn was held in such a high esteem that he was received by the then King with the most honourable marks of distinction On his own part, however, ʿIzz ud-dīn never visited the king unless he was requested to do so Being dignified, straight-forward and self-respecting he did not like to curry favour with the king; instead, he insisted always upon the king to follow the course beneficial for Islam and the Muslims

During his illness Sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf who held the principality of Aleppo after the demise of his father, al-Malik al-ʿAdil, sent for ʿIzz ud-dīn Earlier the Sultan had had some misunderstandings[1] with the Sheikh on account of certain views held by the latter but the same were removed as a result of their meeting The Sultan requested the Sheikh to forgive him for his mistake and also to let him have a word of advise "So far as the request for pardon is concerned," replied ʿIzz ud-dīn, "I forgive everyone with whom I happen to be displeased, for, I never allow the sun to go down upon my animus against anybody Instead of seeking my recompense from the human beings, I desire it from God alone as the Lord has said: *But whosoever pardoneth and amendeth, his wage is the affair of Allah*[2] "As for my benedictions for you",

1 During the sixth and seventh centuries a controversy had arisen between the Hanbalites and Ashʿarites in regard to the attributes of God The former favoured a literal interpretation of the Scripture while the latter held the attributes of God to be distinct from his essence, yet in a way as to forbid any comparison being made between God and His creatures This difference later became a hotly-contested issue between the two groups who came to regard it as a criterion of the true faith ʿIzz ud-dīn, was a Ashʿarite while al-Malik al-Asharaf had a predisposition towards Hanbalite school which had caused a misunderstanding between the two *Tabqāt al-Shafeʿiyah*, Vol V, pp 85-95

2 *Ash-Shūra* 40

added 'Izz ud-dın, "I very often pray to God for the well-being of the Sultan, for this also means the welfare of Islam and the Muslims God may grant the Sultan insight and understanding of the matters which may be helpful to him in the life to come. Now, coming to the advice, it is my bounden duty to enjoin the right course since the Sultan has asked for it. I know that the Sultan is reputed for his valour and the brilliant victories he has won, but Tartars are making inroads into Islamic territories. They have been emboldened by the fact that the Sultan has pitched his arms against al-Malik al-Kāmil and thus he would not have time to face the enemies of God and the persecutors of Muslims. Al-Malik al-Kāmil is, however, the elder brother of the Sultan and, therefore, I would request the Sultan to give up the idea of fighting against his own brother, instead I would advise him to turn his forces against the enemies of Islam. The Sultan should make up his mind, in these critical days of his illness, to fight for the sake of God alone and for restoring the supremacy of His faith. We hope to overcome the infidels with the help of the Sultan, if God restores him his health This would verily be a great achievement but if God has willed otherwise, the Sultan would undoubtedly be recompensed for his intention to come to the rescue of Islam".

Al-Malik al-Ashraf thanked 'Izz ud-dın for his sincere advice and immediately issued orders redirecting his forces to face the Tartars instead of al-Malik al-Kāmil. As soon as the orders of the Sultan were communicated to the commander of his army, he retreated to Kasirah

On al-Malik al-Ashraf's further request to counsel him something more, 'Izz ud-dın said, "The Sultan is bedridden but his chiefs and officials are having rounds of pleasure , they are revelling in wine and wickedness while Muslims are being burdened with new taxes and tithes The most valuable presentation that the Sultan can offer to God is that this cesspool of corruption is cleansed ; illegal imposts are abolished, tyranny is stopped and justice is made available to the people " Al-Malik al-Ashraf not only acted on the advice of 'Izz ud-dın but profusely thanked him saying, "May God give you a goodly reward for performing the

duty enjoined by the religion, on behalf of all the Muslims whose well-wisher you undoubtedly are Sire, allow me to be your companion in the Paradise." The Sultan also presented one thousand Egyptian gold mohurs to ʿIzz ud-dīn but he refused to accept them saying, "I met you only for the sake of God and I do not want any worldly temptation to be made an additional reason for it"

Courage of ʿIzz ud-dīn :

Al-Malik al-Ashraf was succeeded by Sāleh Ismāʿīl who sought help of the Christians against the impending danger of invasion from Egypt In lieu of the aid promised by the Christians the cities of Saida, Thakif and few ôther forts were ceded to them The friendly relations thus established by Sāleh Ismāʿīl encouraged the Christians to purchase arms and ammunition from the Muslim traders in Damascus ʿIzz ud-dīn deprecated these deals as the arms purchased by the Christians were likely to be used against the Muslims and, therefore, when the arms dealers asked for his legal-opinion in the matter, he advised that all such bargains were prohibited by the *Sharīʿah* This was not all, ʿIzz ud-dīn gave up benedictions for the King in the Friday sermons and started invoking the wrath of God on the enemies of Islam.[1] The matter was brought to the notice of the King who ordered to imprison him After some time he was transferred to Jerusalem from his Damascus gaol

In the meantime Sāleh Ismaʿīl along with his allies, al-Malik al-Mansūr, the King of Hams and a few Christian monarchs converged at Jerusalem with the intention of invading Egypt Although Sāleh Ismaʿīl had imprisoned ʿIzz ud-dīn, he was feeling guilty in his heart of heart and wanted to set him free provided ʿIzz ud-dīn was prepared to give him an excuse for the same He, therefore, gave his handkerchief to one of his trusted councillors with the instruction that he should present it to ʿIzz ud-dīn and tell him courteously that if he so desired, his previous position would be

1. *Tabqāt al-Shafeʿiyah*, Vol V, p. 80

restored The councillor was also directed to present ʿIzz ud-din before the King in case he agreed to the suggestion with the highest respect, otherwise to imprison him in a tent beside that of the King. The Councillor did what he had been commissioned, paid his compliments and related the admiration of the King for the Sheikh, and then said, "Everything will be set right and your previous position will be restored in no time, if you just kiss the hands of the king and show courtesy to him." History can perhaps offer few such striking examples of fearless expression, for, ʿIzz ud-din replied, "What a fool you are! You expect me to kiss the hands of the King while I would not like my own hands to be kissed by him My friend, you are living in a world other than that of mine Praise be to Allah that I am not a prey to the temptations which have captured your soul."[1] The Councillor then told him that in that case he had orders to imprison him again The Sheikh was accordingly placed under confinement in a tent beside the king's, who heard him daily reciting the Qurʾān The King one day told his Christian ally that the person whom he heard reciting the Qurʾān at the moment was the chief pontiff of Muslims but he had been divested of his post and honours and kept under confinement because of his opposition to the cession of cities and forts to the Christians The Christian monarch, however, replied that if he were to have such a man as his bishop, he would have felt honoured to sit at his feet[2]

Shortly thereafter Sāleh Ismāʿīl was defeated and killed in an encounter with the Egyptian forces, and ʿIzz ud-din was honourably taken to Egypt.

While on his way to Egypt ʿIzz ud-din passed through the principality of Kark When its Governor requested ʿIzz ud-din to settle in Kark, he replied, "This small city of yours is not befitting my learning"[3]

1 *Tabqāt al-Shafeʿiyah*, Vol V, p 101
2. *Ibid*, Vol V, p 101
3 *Ibid*, Vol V, p 81

ʿIzz ud-dīn in Egypt

ʿIzz ud-dın was receıved by the then Sultan of Egypt, al-Malık al-Sāleh Najm ud-dın Ayyūb, wıth great reverence and honour. He was appoınted *Khatīb* of the Mosque of ʿAmr ıbn al-ʿĀs as well as the grand Cadi of Egypt He was also entrusted wıth the task of lookıng after the rehabılıtatıon of deserted mosques and tlıe professorshıp of Shafeʿı jurısprudence ın Madarsa Salıhıya founded by the Kıng.

Fearlessness of ʿIzz ud-dīn :

A man by the name of Fakhr ud-dın ʿUthmān who was an ıntendant of the palace had come to wıeld a great ınfluence over the Kıng Thıs man got a drum-house constructed over the roof of a mosque. When ʿIzz ud-dın came to know of ıt, he ordered the structure of the drum-house to be pulled down [1] He declared Fakhr ud-dın ʿUthmān as an unreliable wıtness for the purposes of tenderıng evidence in a court of law and also resigned from the post of Chıef Justıce as a mark of protest agaınst the blaspheınous actıon of Fakhr ud-dın ʿUthmān ʿIzz ud-dın contınued to enjoy the esteem of the kıng who, however, dıd not consıder ıt prudent to appoınt ʿIzz ud-dın as grand Cadı for the second time Notwıthstandıng thıs decısıon of the Kıng, juristic-opınions tendered by ʿIzz ud-dın were acted upon wıth the same respect as before Durıng thıs perıod al-Malık al-Sāleh Najm ud-dın Ayyūb sent an embassy to the court of the Calıph ın Baghdad When the Egyptıan envoy was presented before the Calıph he enquired of the envoy ıf the Sultan of Egypt had hımself commıssıoned hım to convey the message On being told that he had been charged to convey the message by Fakhr ud-dın ʿUthmān on behalf of the Sultan, the Calıph replıed that sınce Fakhr ud-dın ʿUthmān had been declared an unreliable wıtness by ʿIzz ud-dın, no credence could be placed on a message conveyed through hım The envoy had to return to Egypt to obtaın the orders of the Sultan afresh

[1] *Tabqāt al-Shafeʿıyah*, Vol V, p 81

There is yet another incident which bespeaks of 'Izz ud-din's fearlessness The Sultan who was holding a durbar on the occasion of 'Id was seated on the throne in a large reception hall, with the princes and chiefs of the State ranged on his right, and the courtiers and dignitaries on the left In front of the Sultan stood all the people entitled to enter and salute the sovereign, when a voice was suddenly heard addressing the Sultan by his first name. "Ayyūb, what would be your reply before God when He would ask you whether the kingdom of Egypt was given to you so that people should openly indulge in drinking-bouts and you should enjoy public receptions?" "Is it," blurted out the Sultan who was taken aback, "is it a fact?" "Yes," came the reply from 'Izz ud-din, "Wine is being freely sold and consumed in the city while people indulge in other vices too" Surprised as the Sultan was, he replied, "But 't is not my fault, Sire, for it has been happening from the time my father held the reigns of this kingdom". "Then, you are one of those," admonished 'Izz ud-din, "who say that *we found our fathers acting on this wise*" The Sultan immediately gave orders to stop the sale of wine in his realm.

While returning from the court one of the pupils of 'Izz ud-din asked him why he had raised the question on that occasion. 'Izz ud-din replied, "When I saw the Sultan surrounded by that pomp and show I thought that he might give himself airs and become a slave to his baser-self I, therefore, thought it necessary to admonish him publicly." "But were you not seized with fright," demanded the disciple further. "Oh no," replied 'Izz ud-din, "I was so much seized by the awe and glory of God Almighty that the Sultan appeared to me as meek as a cat"[2]

'Izz ud-din in the Battlefield

These were the days when the dissensions among the Muslim monarchs had again created a situation favourable to the Crusaders who unsheathed their swords to take an offensive against

1 *Ash-Shu'ara* 74

2 *Tabqāt al-Shafe'iyah*, Vol V, p 82

Mansurah in Egypt. ʿIzz ud-dīn accompanied the forces sent to retrieve the city from the Christians. A chronicler of the time, Ibn al-Subkī, writes that ʿIzz ud-dīn's prayer for the success of Muslim forces was readily answered by God. The reinforcements of the Crusaders could not reach them as their ships were taken by a gale, which submerged quite a few of them [1]

The Mongols had also started raiding and plundering Muslim territories by then Once there was an imminent danger of Mongol invasion of Egypt but the Sultan and his commanders were so disheartened that they could not muster courage to face the Mongol hordes ʿIzz ud-dīn encouraged the Sultan to fight the Mongols. He even assured the Sultan of his success against the Mongols. At last the Sultan agreed to his suggestion but as he was facing paucity of funds he sought the advice of ʿIzz ud-dīn about raising the necessary finances through loans from the businessmen ʿIzz ud-dīn, however, advised "First bring the ornaments your women-folk and those of your dignitaries and nobles have in their possession. These are all prohibited by the *Sharīʿah* and should be used for meeting the expenses of this expedition. And, if you still need the money, then you can raise it through loans " Surprising though it may seem, the king and his nobles brought out without a demur all the jewellery and valuables they possessed as the Sheikh had directed The riches so brought forth was enough to meet the expenses of raising an adequate force to face the Mongols who were defeated by the Egyptian army as predicted by ʿIzz ud-dīn.

An still more surprising incident of the Sheikh's life described by the historians relates to his insistence upon auctioning those dignitaries of the Sultan's court whom he held to be the property of the State exchequer, since they happened to be slaves who had not been emancipated in accordance with the provisions of the *Sharīʿah* These chiefs of the State were recruited as royal levies from the Turkish *memluks* or slaves but had risen to the positions of authority and wielded great influence on the government of Egypt. One of

1. *Tabqāt al-Shafiʿiyah*, Vol V, p 84

them even held the post of a minister to the Sultan ʿIzz ud-dīn pronounced the juristic-opinion that these chiefs were still slaves in accordance with the rules of the *Sharīʿah*, and should be treated as such until they were formally emancipated. The population of Egypt immediately ceased cooperating with such chiefs and dignitaries who were placed in such an invidious position that they had to call upon the Sheikh and to enquire what he proposed to do with them. ʿIzz ud-dīn, however, told them plainly that he would sell them in a public auction on behalf of the State treasury and thereafter they would be emancipated as provided by the *Sharīʿah*. They appealed to the Sultan who also tried, as the annalists have recorded, to placate ʿIzz ud-dīn but he remained adamant. During the discussion on the subject the Sultan told ʿIzz ud-dīn that he should not concern himself with the affairs of the State and also said something, as it has been reported, which was taken ill by ʿIzz ud-dīn. The Sheikh returned to his house and announced his decision to leave Egypt immediately The news spread like a wild fire in Cairo, and an overwhelming majority of its population decided to follow ʿIzz ud-dīn and migrate with him The matter was brought to the notice of the Sultan who was also told that if ʿIzz ud-dīn went away from Egypt, his kingdom would also come to an end Extremely worried by the fastly deteriorating situation, the Sultan himself went to bring ʿIzz ud-dīn back to the city, who had by then left it with a large section of its inhabitants The Sultan had at length to give in to ʿIzz ud-dīn who was allowed to auction the chiefs The *memluk* minister, however, still tried to dissuade the Sheikh but, failing in his efforts, decided to slay ʿIzz ud-dīn. He went with his entourage, sword in hand, to the house of ʿIzz ud-dīn, and knocked at the door The son of ʿIzz ud-dīn, who came out to answer the call, went in and told his father what he had seen but the Sheikh calmly said, "My son, your father is not lucky enough to be slain in the way of God " ʿIzz ud-dīn came out without the slightest trace of fear on his face. As soon as the minister saw ʿIzz ud-dīn, he was overtaken by a flutter and the sword fell from his hand With tears in his eyes he again humbly repeated the question, "My lord, what do you

want to do with us." "I will auction you", was the Sheikh's reply. "And where will you spend the sale proceeds," the minister demanded again The Sheikh replied crisply, "On the welfare of Muslims". The minister asked again, "Who will collect the sale-price". 'Izz ud-din replied, "Myself". The minister at last agreed to be sold by the Sheikh who auctioned him along with other *memluks* As a mark of respect to the position held by these dignitaries, the Sheikh fixed a higher price for each and asked them to deposit the sale-price The money thus collected by 'Izz ud-din was spent on welfare projects while the chiefs were granted their warrant of emancipation The historian Ibn al-Subki writes: "Such an incident was never heard of earlier about anyone."[1] This is perhaps the only example of its kind recorded by history about the deference and veneration ever accorded to any scholar.

'Izz ud-dīn and the Kings of Egypt:

Egypt witnessed quite a few political upheavals during 'Izz ud-din's stay in that country. When he arrived in Egypt, a monarch of Salah ud-din's dynasty, al-Malik al-Sāleh Najm ud-din Ayyūb was ruling over the country. He was succeeded by his son al-Malik al-Mu'azzam Turan Shah after whom the Turkish Chiefs seized the reigns of government. They too held 'Izz ud-din in a high esteem while the celebrated Turk Sultan al-Malik al-Zāhir Baibers was especially devoted to the Sheikh. It was on the advice of 'Izz ud-din that Baibers invited Abul Qasim Ahmad, the uncle of the last Caliph Must'asim b'Illāh who had escaped the massacre by Mongols, to Cairo in 659 A.H , and acknowledged him as Caliph under the title al-Mustansir b'Illāh The first to take the oath of allegiance was 'Izz ud-din, next came the Sultan Baibers followed by the Chief Cadi Taj ud-din, the principal Sheikhs and nobles [2]

1. *Tabqāt al-Shafi'iyah* Vol V, pp 84-85
1. Al-Suyūti, Vol. II, p 49

Moral Rectitude :

ʿIzz ud-dīn was as much celebrated for his generosity, kindness and humanity as for his profound knowledge and piety. The Chief Cadi Badr ud-dīn ibn Jamaʿah relates that when ʿIzz ud-dīn was still in Damascus, a slump in prices once overtook the market As the prices of groves had suffered a steep fall, the wife of ʿIzz ud-dīn gave him an ornament to purchase a grove so that they might spend the summer in it. ʿIzz ud-dīn sold the ornament and gave over the sale proceeds in charity. Later, when his wife asked if he had purchased the grove, ʿIzz ud-dīn replied, "Yes, but in the Paradise. I saw many poor people in great distress and so I spent the money on them" His wife thanked God for the good act of ʿIzz ud-dīn [1]

Cadi Badr ud-dīn has also written that ʿIzz ud-dīn gave as freely when he was poor as when he happened to be rich. If he had nothing to give to a beggar, he would part with a portion of his turban

ʿIzz ud-dīn was equally courageous and truthful against his own self as against the kings and nobles Ibn al-Subki and al-Suyūti write that once during his stay in Egypt ʿIzz ud-dīn made a certain mistake in the juristic-opinion given by him As soon as he came to know of his mistake, he got an announcement made that the people should not act on that opinion since it was wrong.[2]

Ibn al-Subki relates that ʿIzz ud-dīn had also been favoured with the inner enlightenment His fearlessness, disregard for worldly power, fame and riches and, above all, the unflinching faith and trust in God showed that he had attained the sublimeness of spirit As Ibn al-Subki records, ʿIzz ud-dīn was a disciple of the famous spiritual mentor, Sheikh Shahab ud-dīn Suharwardy who had authorised him to guide others in the mystic path [3] ʿIzz ud-dīn had also had the opportunity of meeting and

1. *Tabqāt al-Shafeʿiyah*, Vol. V pp 82-83
2 Al-Suyūti, Vol I, p 142 and *Tabqāt al-Shafeʿiyah*, Vol V, p 83
3 *Tabqāt al-Shafeʿiyah*, Vol V, p 83

remaining in the company of another reputed mystic, Sheikh Abul Hasan Sazli [1]

Righteousness

'Izz ud-din preached and acted on the Qur'ānic dictum commanding to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, no matter what dangers and hardships one might have to face for it.

In one of his letters addressed to the Sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf he wrote

> "What we claim is that we are partisans, friends and helpers or rather the troopers of Allah, and no one can lay a claim to be a combatant unless he is willing to expose himself to danger."[2]

In 'Izz ud-din's view the knowledge and eloquence of a scholar constituted his two weapons which should be fully utilized in the fight for righteousness In his another letter to the Sultan he wrote

> "God has enjoined upon us to strive and fight for His religion Just as you have your swords and lances for your arms, we have our knowledge and parlance, and as it does not befit you to sheathe your sword, similarly we cannot hold our tongue against the innovators and dissenters, apostates and sinners "[3]

'Izz ud-din considered it imperative for the scholars to be ever willing to face dangers in the discharge of their sacred obligation and enjoin the right course, cost what may Thus, he vehemently disagreed with those religious scholars who did not consider it lawful to expose themselves to avoidable dangers His commentary on the Qur'ānic verse " . *and be not cast by your own hands to ruin*'"[4] amply bears out his point of view in this regard :

> "To risk one's life for the honour and dominance of

1 Al-Suyūti, Vol I, p 142
2 *Tabqāt al-Shafe'iyah*, Vol V, p. 95.
3. *Ibid*, Vol V, p 90
4. *Al-Baqrah* : 195

the Faith is permitted by the *Shari'ah*, it is rather enjoined on all able-bodied persons to wage war in the way of God and fight the infidels So it is lawful to expose oneself to danger, under the provisions of the *Shari'ah*, for enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong However, if anyone feels that he might lose his life in the venture, the command loses its obligatory character for him but it nevertheless remains a commendable act Thus, they are definitely wrong who think that it is not lawful to risk one's life for the purpose In short, if anybody gives preference to his Self over God, He will give preference to others over him, if anybody seeks the pleasure of God at the cost of offending others, God will not only bless him but also make others to be pleased with him And if anybody, on the other hand, wants to gratify others by displeasing God, He will be displeased with him and also cause others to be disappointed with him"

"An Arab poet has rightly expressed the same idea in this verse

"I wont' care howsoever troublesome my life may be, if I were only to gain your love, may thou be pleased with me even if this annoys the whole world"[1]

'Izz ud-din lived up to his ideal and never hesitated to sacrifice his health or home, life or honour for what he believed to be the correct and righteous path enjoined by the *Shari'ah*

Writings of 'Izz ud-dīn:

He was an erudite scholar, broad-minded jurist and a successful teacher In penmanship too, he was equally celebrated, his two most well-known works being *al-Qawa'id al-Kubra* and *Kitāb Majāz al-Qur'ān* Ibn al-Subki writes about these books

"These books of 'Izz ud-din mark him as an outstanding scholar of profound knowledge in religious sciences"[2]

1 *Tabqāt al-Shafe'yah*, Vol V p 91

2 *Ibid*, Vol V, p 103

ʿIzz ud-dīn later summarised both the above mentioned books Ibn al-Subkī has also praised his two other books entitled *Shajaratul-Maʿārif* and *Ad-Dalāyel ul-Mulʿalikah bil Malāykah wal-Ir* In addition to these writings one more book of ʿIzz ud-dīn by the name of *Maqāsid us-Salāt* was widely read during his own lifetime Thousands of its copies were made out by the people[1] ʿIzz ud-dīn also left a voluminous collection of the juristic-opinions pronounced by him which is regarded as a valuable collection of legal precepts accordmg to the Shafeʿite school of jurisprudence

ʿIzz ud-dīn was perhaps the next scholar after al-Ghazali in Islam who set forth to define and delineate the objectives of the religious observances and the benefits accruing from the performances enjoined by the *Sharīʿah* In the introduction to his famous treatise *Hujjat Allah il-Bālighā*, Shah Wali Ullah Muhaddith of Delhi, the greatest authority on the subject, has acknowledged his debt to the three earlier masters viz al-Ghazali, Abū Sulaiman Khattābi and ʿIzz ud-dīn[2]

Death of ʿIzz ud-dīn

ʿIzz ud-dīn died in the eighty-third year of his age on the 9th of Jamadi al-Awwal, 660 A H Al-Malik al-Zāhn Baibers, the then king of Egypt, accompanied the funeral of the Sheikh along with the dignitaries and chiefs The King was very much aggrieved that the Sheikh's death was destined to occur during his reign

Witnessing the mammoth funeral procession passing by the side of the royal Castle the King said to one of his councillors "My kingdom would have been nowhere if this man had decided to oppose me He had verily won the hearts of the people "[3]

1 *Tabqāt al-Shafeʿiyah*, Vol V, p 98
2 *Hujjat*, Vol I, p 6
3 *Tabqāt al Shafeʿiyah*, Vol V, p 84

CHAPTER XII

TARTARS—THE SCOURGE OF GOD

The Causes of Tartar Invasion

Islam was confronted with another danger in the seventh century, unparalled in the annals of the world, which was about to wipe it out of existence This was the invasion of the wild and savage hordes of the Tartars who issued forth from the Mongolian steppes and over-powered almost the whole of the Islamic world with a lightning speed.

The immediate cause of the Mongol invasion can be attributed to a grevious mistake of ʿAla ud-dīn Muhammad, the Shah of Khwarism [1] A body of traders who had arrived from Mongolia was put to death, and when Chengiz Khan deputed an embassy te enquire into the reasons for it, Muhammad replied by killing the envoy too Un receiving the news of this outrage upon international courtesy, the Mongol Khakan Chengiz Khan unloosened the whirlwind of savagery upon the world of Islam

However, if one were to look into the moral behaviour and attitudes of ancient nations, particularly those relating to the Bani Israel as well as their destruction and massacre, demolition and sacrilege of Jerusalem, and the reasons therefor described in the Qurʾān,[2] one can clearly see with the insight provided by the Scripture into the nature of historical process, that the reason for converting the Islamic world into a vast charnel-house was not a

1 Khwarism was the area south of Aral sea on the lower course of Amū Darya (Oxus) which now forms part of Turkmanistan and Uzbekistan Republics of U S S R

2 One need look into the verses 4 to 7 of the Chapter *Bani Israel* in Qurʾān which brings out the religio-moral standpoint of the Scripture in regard to the downfall of the nations

solitary act of cruelty on the part of a reckless and haughty sovereign As the Qur'ān tells us, it was certainly not due to the mistake of a single individual that the storm of death and destruction burst forth on the entire world of Islam If we were to cast a glance over the religious, moral, social and political conditions of the Muslim peoples in those days, there would be no difficulty in finding out the reason for this calamity Such a survey would amply bear out that the carnage did not take place all of a sudden. It had deeper and far-reaching reasons than those narrated hitherto by the historians We shall have to look for these reasons into the political situation and the social condition of Muslim society over a century or more prior to the Mongol invasion.

After the death of Salah ud-dīn in 589 A H , the vast empire carved out by him split up into several independent principalities and kingdoms headed by his sons or other successors Like many other founders of the Empires his successors did not possess the talent of their progenitor, and, what was more, they continued to fight each other for a fairly long time Some of these even did not hesitate to seek the assistance of the Crusaders against their own brethren, an instance of which has already been cited in the previous section The whole of Islamic world was, in fact, in a state of chaos , nowhere was to be found peace and tranquility , a moral and social disintegration was at work which was clearly visible in the rapidly deteriorating political situation The Crusaders were again making inroads into the Muslim territories and had recaptured the lands emancipated from their clutches by Salah ud-dīn All those factors had already contributed to the repeated famines and epidemics. A fertile country like Egypt was so devastated by the fratricidal warfare between al-Malik al-ʿAdil and his nephew al-Malik al-Afzal that when the floods in Nile failed in 597 A H., the country was overtaken by such a severe famine[1] that the people had to take resort to cannibalism Death stalked over the land killing the people in such large numbers that the dead had to be buried without shrouds The annalist Abū Shāma

1. Ibn Kathīr, Vol XIII, p. 26

relates that Sultan al-Malik al-ʿAdil provided shrouds for two hundred and twenty thousand dead bodies in a single month People began to take the dogs' and human flesh without any feeling of revulsion, innumerable children were eaten away Ibn Kathir writes that a stage came when the children and youth of tender age were all eaten up and people began to kill one another to satisfy their hunger [1] These were grim reminders of God calling people to a sincere penitence for their sins and mending their ways The ravages of famine and pestilence were followed by a severe and widespread earthquake which hit the region covering Syria, Asia Minor and Iraq The devastation and destruction wrought by the earthquake can be judged from the fact that in the town of Nabulus[2] and its surrounding district 20,000 people were crushed under the fallen houses Another historian writes in *Mirʾāt al-Zaman* that eleven hundred thousand people died as a result of this earthquake [3]

On the one hand, these natural calamities were visiting the Islamic world with unwelcome regularity, and, on the other, fratricidal feuds and forays were continuing unabated In 601 A H the two chiefs belonging to the same family, Qatādah Husaini of Mecca and Sālim Husami of Madina were locked up in a hotly contested battle [4] In 603 A.H the deadly feuds between the Ghorids of Afghanistan and the ruler of Khwarism flared up which encouraged the Muslims to waste their energy and power by shedding each others' blood [5] This was the state of affairs on the one side, while the Christendom had inflamed another Crusade,[6] on the other, barely two years after the death of Salah ud-din, and landed[7] its forces on the Syrian coast in 604 A H The rulers of

1 Ibn Kathīr, Vol XIII, p 26
2 Also known as Shechem, is in Jordan
3 The estimate may appear to be somewhat exaggerated
4 Ibn Kathīr, Vol XIII, p 41
5 *Ibid* , Vol XIII, p 45
6 A general tax known as Saladin tenth was imposed in 1198 for the recovery of Palestine by Pope Innocent the Third
7. Ibn Kathīr, Vol XIII, pp 48-49.

al-Jazirah[1] were secretly in league with the Franks[2] in 607 A.H. while Damietta in Egypt, a city of considerable military importance, had fallen to the Crusaders in 616 A.H.[3]

In the metropolis of Islam, Baghdad, the magnificence and splendour of the Caliph's court, copied from the etiquettes and ceremonials observed by the Iranian and Byzantine Emperors had touched the summit of extravagance. It is difficult to imagine the wealth amassed by such personal servants of the Caliphs as pages, cupbearers, attendants of wardrobe who normally entered the service merely as slaves The annual income from the property acquired by ʿAla ud-din al-Tabrasi al-Zāhri a slave purchased by the Caliph al-Zāhir is reported to have been as much as three hundred thousand *Dinars* The house built by him in Baghdad was conspicuous for its size and beauty. Similar was the case with other state officials—Mujahid ud-din Aibek, al-Salāh ʿAbdul Ghani to name only a few The former had an annual income of five lakh *Dinars* while the latter although an illiterate man lived like a prince Annalists have left staggering accounts of their lavish expenditure on the marriages of their sons and daughters On the other hand the teachers of the celebrated Madarsa al-Mustansaryah were doled out such paltry sums which bore no comparison to the wages paid to the meanest of the state officials The most erudite scholars and professors did not get more than twelve *Dinars* a month while the servant of al-Sharābi, a grandee of the ʿAbbāsid regime, could spend four thousand *Dinars* on a marriage and pay another three thousand as the price of a bird brought for him from Mosul.[4]

The royal processions of the Caliphs on the occasion of ʿId and to mark the anniversary of their succession to throne were seized as an opportunity for ostentatious display of royal pomp and

1 Northern part of the territory falling between the rivers of Euphrates and Tigris

2 Ibn Kathir, Vol XIII, pp. 58-59

3 *Ibid*, Vol XIII, p 79

4 For details see *Al-Hawadith al-Jamiah* and *al-Ayad il-Mashriq*

pageantry The whole of Baghdad came out to witness these processions in a mood, free and easy, amusing and entertaining itself and oblivious of even obligatory congregational prayers In 640 A H the royal procession taken out on the occasion of *ʿId* terminated after the night-fall with the result that most of the people witnessing the procession performed the *ʿId* prayers just before midnight [1] Again in 644 A H a large number of people missed the prayers on the occasion of *ʿId al-Adʾha* and performed the same at the time of sunset

The usual mode of making obeisance to the Caliph was to bow almost to the ground, or touch the ground with one's nose, but nobody even felt in it anything opposed to the teachings of the *Shariʿah* or degrading to his independent and manly character Confiscation of private property had become a common affair, illegal gratification by officials was widely prevalent, immodesty and grossness of conduct was on the increase, the Batinites, charlatans and swindlers were basking in sunshine, everyone seemed to be after wealth, love of music had grown almost into a craze, in short, the common pursuits of the people and the social and moral disintegration of the society threw a lurid light on the state of chaos then prevailing in the Muslim world [2]

This was the time when the Mongols were devastating Turkistan and Iran and were casting a covetous glance over Baghdad "The year 626 A H began," writes Ibn Kathir, "with the indecisive yet sanguinary battles between the monarchs of the house of Ayyubids" Such a state of chaos prevailed in Baghdad, the centre of Caliphate, that from 640 A H to 643 A H no arrangements could be made by the Caliph for sending out *Hajj* parties nor was the covering for Kʿaba sent by the Caliph For 21 days the walls of the holy shrine remained without a cover, which was taken as an ill-omen by the people

Ahmad Abul ʿAbbās succeeded his father, Caliph al-Mustadhi, in 575 A H under the title of Al-Nasir li' Din-Illāh He had had

1 *Al-Asjad il-Masbūq*, Events, 610 A H

2 Article *Asr al-Shuubi bi-Baghdad* by Naji Maʿarūf in the Journal *Al-Aqlām*, Baghdad, Muharram 1386 A H

an opportunity to rule for forty-six years His reign was the longest one ever enjoyed by any ʿAbbāsid Caliph yet, perhaps, it was also the darkest of all the regimes of the house of ʿAbbāsids Historians have severely criticised his regime for tyranny and mal-administration Writes Ibn al-Athīr

> "He was a tyrant who ill-treated the populace Iraq was a devastated land during his regime, its population migrated to neighbouring countries, and their possessions were confiscated by the Caliph He gave contradictory orders rescinded the orders given by him a day earlier. Being too much interested in sports and pastime, he had prescribed a special uniform which could be put on only by those permitted to take part in gymnastics and athletic sports His orders so severely curtailed the sports that these activities practically came to an end in Iraq His interest in the entertainments had grown almost into a craze Iranians accuse him of inviting the Mongols to attack the Muslim territories[1] and hatching a conspiracy for the same "[2]

Al-Nāsir li'Dīn-Illāh died in 622 A H and Mustansir b'Illāh (623-640) ascended the throne[3] He was a just, mild, benevolent and pious ruler, recalling the right-guided Caliphs', but unfortunately he did not get enough time to reform the administration He was succeeded by his son Mustʿasim b'Illah in 640 A H He too was a pious and just sovereign who never touched wine nor indulged in immodest acts He had committed the Qurʾān to memory and observed fast on the Mondays and Thursdays in addition to those during the months of Ramadhan and Rajab He is reported to be punctual in the performance of prayers but, according to Ibn al-Athir, he was too mild and miserly and also lacked foresight

1 In order to weaken the kingdom of Khwarism
2 *Al-Kāmil* Vol XII, p 181
3 Al-Zāhir, succeeded Al-Nasir in 622 A H but al-Mustansir ascended the throne only after a year in 623 A H after the death of al-Zahir
4 Ibn Kathir, Vol XIII, p 159

In 642 A H , a man by the name of Muwayyid ud-din Muhammad Ibn ᶜAlqami[1] was appointed as Prime Minister by the Caliph Mustᶜasim Disorders and disturbances were a source of constant trouble in Baghdad specially when the Sunnis and Shiᶜahs quarrelled in 655 A H It is reported that in these riots the Shiᶜah quarters including those of the relatives of Ibn ᶜAlqami were plundered which led him to seek revenge from the Sunnis.[2] Although the danger of the Mongol invasion was hovering over Baghdad, a great reduction was made in the armed forces on the advice of Ibn ᶜAlqami The number of cavalry was reduced to mere 10,000, their allowances and promotions were withheld , the disbanded soldiers were directed to take to trade and husbandry with the result that many of them were later on seen begging alms in the bazaars and in front of the mosques Islam was reduced to the state of imbecility which led many poets to compose elegies to lament the helplessness of the Muslim peoples [3]

Al-Mustᶜasim was personally a man of unimpeachable character He also wanted to reform administration and bring peace and prosperity in his realm but unfortunately he lacked the courage, zeal and ability of the founders of empires which alone could have saved the situation by infusing a breath of new life in the then tottering society and the administration It has happened more than once that the last monarch of any ruling dynasty was just and wise, virtuous and humane but the degeneration of social and political order had reached the point in his time where its only natural outcome was final decay and crumbling down of that dynasty This was the case with Mustᶜasim too whom Providence had chosen for the badge of infamy, although he was better than most of his predecessors and had also a desire to set right the fastly deteriorating situation

It is undoubtedly true that a group of people, pure in spirit and righteous in conduct, were there teaching and preaching in

1 His full name was Muwayyid ud-din Abū Talib Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn ᶜAli Muhammad ᶜAlQami

2 Ibn Kathir, Vol XIII, p 196

3 *Ibid* , Vol XIII, p 201.

the mosques and seminaries of Baghdad but the affluent and those in authority had become so corrupt that an annalist of that age, Abul Hasan Khazraji had to describe the conditions prevailing in his time in these words:

> "The desire to acquire estates and effects has become a craze with these people who never think of the community's welfare. They are so engrossed in feathering their own nests that it can never be deemed as a rightful course The officials of the government are all tyrants who are obsessed with the idea of amassing as much wealth as possible... This is the most dangerous state of affairs for the government can co-exist with apostasy but never with tyranny."[1]

In the eastern part of the Islamic world, the kingdom of Khwarism, raised towards the end of the fifth century of the Muslim era on the ruins of Saljukid Empire, held sway over almost the entire Islamic territories excluding the principalities of Saljukid Sultans over parts of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Hejaz and Asia Minor and that of the Ghorids in Afghanistan. Sultan 'Ala ud-din Muhammad Khwarism Shah (596-617) was one of the most powerful Muslim monarchs or perhaps the greatest sovereign of his day. Harold Lamb writes in his famous book *Genghiz Khan*.

> "In the centre of Islam, Mohammed Shah of Kharesm had enthroned himself as war lord His domain extended from India to Baghdad, and from the sea of Aral to the Persian Gulf Except for the Seljuk Turks, victors over the crusaders, and the rising Memluk dynasty in Egypt, his authority was supreme. He was the emperor, and the Kalif – who quarrelled with him but might not deny him— was restricted to the spiritual authority of a pope."[2]

Muslim historians have not mentioned any noticeable personal laxity in the character or moral behaviour of Khwarism Shah On the other hand, they speak of him as a brave and

1 Article *Asr al-Sharābi bi-Baghdad* by Naji Ma'arūf in the journal *al-Aqlām* of Baghdad, Muharram, 1386 A H

2 Harold Lamb, p 120

chivalrous ruler, just and pious, but there is no denying the fact that he spent his prowess and capabilities in subjugating the Muslim Kingdoms around his dominions. In the north-west of his territory he forced the Saljukids to retreat to the farthest end while he restrained the westward ambitions of the Ghorids by subjugating Khorasan, Mazandran,[1] Kirman, Ghazni and Transoxiana These unending wars of Khwarism Shah had, nevertheless, worn out his troops who had to strain every nerve in achieving the conquests they had had so far Apart from the warphobia normally created by the continuous warfare over a long period of time, the conquest of the most fertile and industrially developed areas had brought to the capital of Khwarism Shah all that toil and labour could produce, along with the attendant vices of opulance and luxury It is difficult to find any detailed account of these social ills in the annals of the time which are mostly concerned with the descriptions of kings and emperors Unfortunately, however, the treatises and sermons, monographs and discourses of the saints and preachers, which would have thrown a lurid light on the subject were all destroyed by the Mongolian avalanche There is hardly any reason for attributing the following statement of Harold Lamb to his religious prejudice or exaggeration

> "It was a martial world, appreciative of song, with an ear not unmusical A world beset by inward throes, slave-ridden, wealth gathering, and more than a little addicted to vice and intrigue It left the management of its affairs to extortioners and its women to the custody of eunuchs, and its conscience to the keeping of Allah "[2]

The Sultans of Khwarism made the same fatal mistake which was committed by the Moors in Spain—an unpardonable blunder under the Divine Law of Retribution governing the historical process They set about, body and soul, to extend and strengthen

1 Mazandran was a province to the south of Caspian Sea bounded on the west by Gilān, and on the south by the province of Astarābad

2 Harold Lamb p 117

Lamb whose accounts agree with those left by Muslim historians.[1] He says

"But the Mongol's experiment with trade came to an abrupt end A caravan of several hundred merchants from Karakorum was seized by one, Inaljuk,[2] governor of Otrar, a frontier citadel belonging to the Shah. Inaljuk reported to his master that spies were among the merchants—which may very well have been the case

"Mohammed Shah, without considering the matter overmuch, sent to his governor an order to slay the merchants, and all of them, accordingly, were put to death. Thus, in due time, was reported to Genghiz Khan who dispatched envoys at once to the Shah to protest And Mohammed saw fit to slay the chief of the envoys and burn off the beards of the others.

"When the survivors of his embassy returned to Genghiz Khan, the master of the Gobi went apart to a mountain to meditate upon the matter. The slaying of a Mongol envoy could not go unpunished, tradition required revenge for the wrong inflicted.

"There cannot be two suns in the heavens," the Khan said, "or two *Kha Khans* upon the earth."[3]

The Tartaric Invasion :

Thus the storm burst in 616 A H Bukhara was first razed to the ground, and its inhabitants put to the sword. Samarkand was reduced to ashes and its entire population passed under the sword Other important and populous cities like Ray,[4] Hamadan,[5] Zanjan,[6]

1 Ibn Kathīr, Vol XIII, pp 200-204 and al-Kamil, Vol XII, p 149

2 Minhaj ud-dīn, has given his name as Kadar Khan (*Tabqāt-i-Nāsri*, p 272)

3 Harold Lamb, pp 116-117

4 Ray—The ancient town of Ragha, to the south-east of Tehran and to the south of spur projecting from Elburz into the plain

5 Hamadan lies in the fertile plain at the foot of Mt Elmend in Persia.

6 Zanjan—A town in the northern Persia

Qazwin,[1] Marv,[2] Nishapur[3] met the same fate The forces of Khwarism Shah, the most powerful Muslim sovereign of his day, were simply swept away by the tempest of the Mongol arms, Khwarism Shah was himself hunted from place to place by the Tartars with ruthless pertinacity Muhammad Khwarism Shah ultimately took refuge in an unknown island in the Caspian Sea, where he died broken-hearted, alone and abandoned

Khwarism Shah had already dismembered the independent Islamic Kingdoms of Iran and Turkistan and, therefore, none had remained in the east to check the onslaught of the Mongols after his defeat The Muslims were so seized with the terror of the Mongols that often a lonely Tartar attacked a hundred of them but none had the heart to defend himself—everyone of them was killed by the Tartar without being opposed by a single Muslim Once a Mongol woman, dressed as a man, plundered a house and killed all its inmates excepting a captive It was only after this that the captive somehow came to know that the marauder was a woman, and then he could muster his courage to kill her It often happened that a Mongol caught hold of a Muslim and asked him to wait till he brought a sabre to slaughter him, and this poor man did not have the courage to run away in the absence of the Mongol [4]

"The scourge of God" was the greatest of calamities before which almost the entire world of Islam was swept away as by a torrent, it left the Muslims astounded and terror-stricken The Mongols came to be regarded so invincible that an Arabic proverb

1 Qazwin—A town in Persia in the province of Irāk-Ajami, 100 miles to the south of Tehran, at the foot of Mt Elburz

2 Marv—The principal town and centre of culture in the rich oasis which occupies the lower course of river Murghāb in Persia

3 Nishapur—The most important of the four great cities of Khurasān, it was one of the greatest cities of middle ages

4 For details *see* Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil, Vol XII and *Darratul Ma'ārif Lil-Bustāmi*, Vol VI

gained currency which meant that if anybody tells you that the Tartars have suffered a defeat, don't believe him Death and destruction was a foregone conclusion for all the lands through which the Tartar hordes passed , palaces. mosques and mausoleums were all levelled to the ground and trampled into dust Historians are normally prone to be objective in their assessment of the past events but even such a cool and temperate historian as Ibn al-Athir could not help shedding his tears over the havoc and ruin caused by the savage ardour of the Mongols for rapine and slaughter. Speaking of these events in a harrowing strain Ibn al-Athir says

> "These events are so frightful and heart-rending that for several years I was in a fix whether I should narrate these happenings or not I have, however, penned these facts most reluctantly In truth and reality, it is not easy to recount the tale of carnage and atrocities perpetrated on the Muslims, nor can one bear with equanimity the abasement to which they were subjected I only wish that my mother had not given me birth ! Oh, would that I had died before I had to relate this tale of woe ! Some of my friends had insisted that I should record these events but I was still irresolute Later, it dawned on me that it was of no profit to forego the task The invasion of the Tartars was one of the greatest of calamities and the most terrible of visitations of which there is no parallel in the annals of the world. This calamity fell on all nations, but on the Muslims more than all If one were to claim that the world, since God created it to the present times, was never so afflicted, one would speak truthfully, for, history records no other event which approaches it, and perhaps the world may not see its like again except the calamity of Gog and Magog till the dawn of the Doomsday The Tartars put to the sword all men, women and children, cut open the bellies of the pregnant women and trampled the babies to death *Verily, unto God do we belong and unto Him shall we return There is no power, no might but from Allah, the Most High, the Great*
>
> "This was an affliction which overwhelmed the entire

world, like a severe torrent it suddenly swept over all the lands "[1]

The author of *Mirsād ul-ʿAbād*, who belonged to Hamdan and was born at Ray, and was thus an eye-witness to the Mongol invasion, has left the following harrowing account

"The year 617 A H shall ever remain conspicuous in the annals of the world, for the hordes of heathen Tartars gained ascendancy over the Muslims in that year The way they ravaged the countries, killed the people and plundered and burnt the cities has a parallel neither in the days of Ignorance nor thereafter . It is enough to mention that in Ray, where I was born and lived, in Turkistan and in the lands extending from Rūm to Syria more than seven hundred thousand persons were either put to sword or made captives. The calamity befalling Islam and its adherents is beyond description and the holocaust is rather too well-known to require any detailed enumeration God forbid, none of the monarchs and sovereigns of Islam felt the urge to defend the honour of Islam, nor were they alive to their duty of coming to the rescue of their subjects although they were like a shepherd unto their own people, and that they would have to render an account in regard to their safety on the Day of Judgement It was their duty to have strained every nerve to strengthen Islam and defend the faith as God has ordered . *Go forth, light-armed and heavy-armed, and strive with your wealth and your lives in the way of Allah*[2] They should have sacrificed everything they had—their lives, riches, dominions—for the honour of Islam This would have given heart to others and fired a frenzy of enthusiasm among the Muslims, which would have contained and turned back the onslaught of the heathens

"But now nothing remains except to seek the refuge of God Whatever of Islam is still visible is exposed to the

1 *Al-Kamil*, Vol. XII, pp 147-148

2. *At-Taubah* 41

danger of being completely effaced leaving no trace of it whatsoever "[1]

Not the Muslims alone, but the entire civilized world trembled before the savage Tartar hordes Their atrocities had caused a flutter even in those far off corners of the then world where Tartars could have hardly been expected to carry their arms

Edward Gibbon writes in his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*

"The Latin world was darkened by this cloud of savage hostility, a Russian fugitive carried the alarm to Sweden, and the remote nations of the Baltic and the ocean trembled at the approach of the Tartars,[2] whom their fear and ignorance were inclined to separate from the human species "[3]

The maddening frenzy for death and destruction aroused by Chenghiz Khan amongst the Mongols and the significance of this upsurge has been well summed up by the authors of the *Cambridge Medieval History*

"Unchecked by human valour, they were able to overcome the terrors of vast deserts, the barriers of mountains and seas, the severities of climate, and the ravages of famine and pestilence No dangers could appal them, no stronghold could resist them, no prayer for mercy could move them . We are confronted with a new power in history, with a force that was to bring to an abrupt end as a *deus ex machina*, many dramas that would otherwise have

1 Râzi, pp 8-10

2 In the year 1238, the inhabitants of Gothia (Sweden) and Frise were prevented, by their fear of the Tartars from sending, as usual, their ships to the herring fishery on the coast of England, and, as there was no exportation forty or fifty of these fish were sold for a shilling (Mathew Paris, p 396) It is whimsical enough that the orders of a Mogul Khan, who reigned on the borders of China should have lowered the price of herrings in the English market

3 Gibbon, p 16

ended in a deadlock, or would have dragged on an interminable course "[1]

Harold Lamb continues on the impact of Chenghiz Khan

"This 'new power in history'—the ability of one man to alter human civilization—began with Genghiz Khan and ended with his grandson Kubilai, when the Mongol empire tended to break up It has not reappeared since "[2]

Sack of Baghdad

At last in 656 A H the myriads of savages and heathens advanced towards Baghdad, killing every man that came in their way, setting fire to every habitation and trampling into dust whatever they could not possess The metropolis of Islam, celebrated throughout the world as the centre of civilization, learning and crafts was reduced to ashes, the sack of Baghdad is too harrowing and lengthy to be detailed here The accounts given by the contemporary historians include some eye-witness accounts of the carnage and atrocities committed by the Mongols Ibn al-Athir writes

"The horrors of rapine and slaughter lasted forty days, and, after the carnage was over, the most populous and beautiful city of the world was so devastated that only a few people could be seen here and there All the streets and markets were strewn with dead bodies, heaps of corpses were to be found like small mounds from place to place After the rains the dead bodies began to rot giving out a disagreeable smell of the putrid flesh and then a deadly pestilence ravaged the town which spread as far as the land of Syria Innumerable people died as a result of this epidemic The ravages of a terrible famine and pestilence and the rising prices reigned over the city thereafter "[3]

1 Harold Lamb, p 210
2 *Ibid*, p 210
3 Ibn Kathīr, Vol XIII, pp 202-203 (Abbreviated)

Taj ud-dīn Ibn al-Subkī gives his own account of the barbarous acts of Mongols

"Halaku received the Caliph (al-Mustᶜasim) in a tent while Ibn ᶜAlqamī invited the doctors of religion and other notables of the city to be a witness to the agreement between Halaku and the Caliph. When they had repaired to the Mongol camp, all were passed under the sword They were called one by one in a tent and beheaded until none amongst the chiefs and counsellors of the Caliph remained alive It was commonly believed that if the blood of the Caliph fell on the ground, some great calamity would overtake the world Halaku was, therefore, hesitant but Nasīr ud-dīn Tūsī[1] intervened to suggest that the problem

1 An Iranian historian confirms the incident in his book *Ahwāl-o-Athār-i-Khwaja Nasīr ud-dīn Tūsī*", which has been published by the Tehran University He says that Tūsī was at last successful in his endeavour to dismember the Caliphate and to reduce the castle of the Caliph to dust Halaku had already been commissioned by his brother Khakan Mangu to put an end to the Caliphate after destroying the Batinites Halaku sent messages of submission to the Caliph which, however, remained unheeded Thereafter Halaku consulted his counsellors whether or not the stars were favourable for mounting an attack A Sunni astrologer, Hisām ud-dīn by name, advised Halaku that the time was most inopportune for launching an attack on Baghdad and anyone who desired to harm the Caliph at that hour would be defeated and suffer a grievous loss Hisām ud-dīn said that if Halaku persisted in his attempt, there would be no rains, torrents and hurricanes will devastate the world and, what is more, the Khakan would be dead Halaku was dismayed but he asked Tūsi, "What would happen if I attack Baghdad" "Nothing", replied Tūsī, "except that Khan will be monarch in place of the Caliph" Thereupon Halaku ordered Tūsī and Hisām ud dīn to debate the issue before him "Thousands of the companions of the Prophet were killed," argued Tūsī, "but nothing happened Even if you attribute any special piety and charismatic power to the ᶜAbbāsids, look at Tāhir who killed Amin under the orders of Ma'mūn, or Mutawakkil who was strangled to death by his sons and slaves, or else Muntasir and Mu'tadhid who were done to death by their chiefs and guards ! Did even any calamity overtake the world ?" (*Nasīr ud-dīn Tūsī*, pp 9 19)

could easily be solved The Caliph should be killed, he suggested, in a way that his blood did not fall on the ground. The Caliph was accordingly rolled in a carpet and then beaten to death."[1]

The general massacre continued in Baghdad for more than a month. Only those could save themselves who were able to find a hiding place Halaku then ordered, it is related, to count the dead, who numbered eighteen hundred thousand.[2]

Christians were asked to take bacon and wine publicly Although it was the month of Ramadhan, the Muslims of Baghdad were compelled to participate in these drinking bouts Wine was sprinkled in the mosques and the call for prayer was prohibited. Nothing so despicable had happened since the foundations of Baghdad were laid the city had come under the heathen rule for the first time and had never before undergone such a humiliation[3]

In spite of all its vices and weaknesses, Baghdad was the metropolis of Islam, a centre of learning, arts and crafts as well as a city of mosques and shrines, saints and preachers Its destruction made the heart of every Muslim bleed, the heart-rending account of its ruin was rendered by many poets into songs of mourning Sᶜadi of Shiraz who had lived in Baghdad during his student days and had seen the city in its hey-day of glory, has described the fall of Baghdad in a language that shows his depth of misery.

"For it has seen the kingdom of Mustᶜasim destroyed,
The heaven would be justified if it sheds the rain-tears of blood.
If you will rise on the Day of Judgement,
O Muhammad,
Rise now to see the most severe affliction.

1. *Tabqāt al-Shafeᶜiyah*, Vol V, pp 114-115
2. Some historians have given a lower estimate but the figure should not be off the mark for Baghdad had then a population of two and a half millions (*Tabqāt al-Shafeᶜiyah*, Vol V, p 115)
3. *Tabqāt al-Shafeᶜiyah*, Vol V, p 115

The blood of beauties slaughtered in the castle,
Overflows the gates of the palace
And our tears stain our garments.
Beware of the turn of time and its vicissitudes,
For who knew the glorious would come to such an abrupt end.
Lo[1] you had seen the glory of the house of Caliphs,
Where the Caesars and Khakans bowed low in obeisance
The blood of the progeny of Muhammad's uncle,
Is shed on the very earth where the Sultans placed their heads
Coloured with blood, the waters of the Tigris will turn the ground red,
If it flows to irrigate the desert oasis of Bat'ha [1]
Defaced by the calamity it has had to suffer,
Wrinkles of waves are seen on the face of the Tigris
No elegy is really befitting the elevated souls,
Whose minimum reward is the bliss of God in Paradise,
I am shedding my tears only in sympathy,
For Muslims they were, and I hold them dear "[2]

From Baghdad, the Mongol hordes marched on to Haleb (Aleppo), sacked the city and turned to Damascus They captured Damascus in Jamadi al-Ula, 658 A H The Christian inhabitants of the city came out with presents to greet the conquerors Ibn Kathir who belonged to Damascus, has portrayed the joy of Christians and the helplessness of the Muslims in these words

"The Christians came back by the Gate of Toma, carrying the cross over their heads and shouting slogans They were praising Christianity and openly disparaging Islam and the Muslims They had flasks of wine from which they sprinkled the liquor in front of the mosques and

1 Madina
2 Stanl, pp 56-57

on the faces of Muslims they happened to pass by, ordering the Muslims to pay homage to their emblem Muslims could not restrain themselves for long and gathered in large numbers and pushed them back to the Cathedral of Mary where a Christian clergy delivered a speech praising Christianity and denigrating Islam and its followers "[1]

Thereafter Ibn Kathir continues his description on the authority of *Zail ul-Mira'ta*.

"The Christians then entered the mosque with wine in their hands They intended to pull down a number of mosques in case the reign of Tartars continued for sometime more *'Ulema*, Cadis and other Muslim notables repaired to the citadel of the Tartar governor El Siyan to make a complaint about the excesses of the Christians but they were turned out by him El Siyan, however, gave a hearing to the Christians *Verily, unto God do we belong and unto Him shall we return* "[2]

After the fall of Syria, the Mongols wanted to carry their arms to Egypt which was the only Muslim country still out of their reach The Sultan of Egypt, al-Malik al-Muzaffar Saif ud-din Qataz knew that his country would be the next target of the Mongols, and also, that it would be difficult to hold off those savages if they were allowed to make adequate preparations for invading his lands He, therefore, decided to attack the Mongols in Syria before they were able to consolidate their power The forces of Egypt accordingly met the Mongols at 'Ain Jalut, a town below Nazareth in Palestine, on the 25th of Ramadhan, 658 A H , under the command of Baibers who afterwards became the sovereign of Egypt Unlike previous battles the Muslims met the Mongols in a hotly contested battle and drove back the stream of savage hordes The Egyptians pursued the defeated Mongols, slaughtering and capturing a large number of them, east-ward beyond the Euphrates Al-Suyūti writes in *Tārīkh ul-Khulfā'*

"The Muslims were, by the grace of God, victorious

1 Ibn Kathīr, Vol XIII, pp 219-220
2 *Ibid* , Vol XIII, pp 219 220

and they inflicted a grevious defeat on the Tartars A large number of Tartars were put to the sword The retreating Tartars were so disheartened that people easily caught hold of them and despoiled them of their possessions "[1]

Sultan Baibers defeated the Tartars in many a fierce battles after the battle of ʿAin Jalūt and thus disproved the proverb that the Tartars were invincible

Conversion of the Mongols :

Islam was about to be submerged in the whirl-pool of the Mongol ardour of slaughter and destruction, as several Muslim writers had then expressed the fear, wiping it out of existence, but Islam suddenly began to capture the hearts of the savage Tartars The preachers of Islam thus accomplished a task which the sword-arm of the faith had failed to perform by carrying the message of Islam to the barbaric hordes of heathen Mongols

Conversion of the Mongols to Islam was indeed one of the few unpredictable events of history The Tartaric wave of conquest which had swept away the entire Islamic east within a short period of one year was, in truth, not so astounding as the Mongol's acceptance of Islam during the zenith of their glory, for, the Muslims had by the beginning of the seventh century of Muslim era imbibed all those vices which are a natural outcome of the opulence, luxury and fast living The Mongols were, on the other hand, a wild and ferocious, yet vigorous and sturdy race who could have hardly been expected to submit to the spiritual and cultural superiority of a people so completely subdued by them, and who were also looked down and despised by them The author of the *Preaching of Islam*, T W Arnold has also expressed his amazement over the achievement of this unbelievable feat

"But Islam was to rise again from the ashes of its former grandeur and through its preachers win over these savage conquerors to the acceptance of the faith This was a task for the missionary energies of Islam that was rendered

1 *Tārīkh al-Khulafā'* p 191

more difficult from the fact that there were two powerful competitors in the field. The spectacle of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam emulously striving to win the allegiance of the fierce conquerors that had set their feet on the necks of adherents of these great missionary religions, is one that is without parallel in the history of the world[1]

'For Islam to enter into competition with such powerful rivals as Buddhism and Christianity were at the outset of the period of Mongol rule, must have appeared a well-nigh hopeless undertaking For the Muslims had suffered more from the storm of the Mongol invasions than the others Those cities that had hitherto been the rallying points of spiritual organisation and learning for Islam in Asia, had been for the most part laid in ashes: the theologians and pious doctors of the faith, either slain or carried away into captivity.[2] Among the Mongol rulers—usually so tolerant towards all religions—there were some who exhibited varying degrees of hatred towards the Muslim faith Chingiz Khān ordered all those who killed animals in the Muhammadan fashion to be put to death, and this ordinance was revived by Qūbilāy, who by offering rewards to informers set on foot a sharp persecution that lasted for seven years, as many poor persons took advantage of this ready means of gaining wealth, and slaves accused their masters in order to gain their freedom.[3] During the reign of Kuyūk

1. Arnold, p 219

2 So notoriously brutal was the treatment they received that even the Chinese showmen in their exhibitions of shadow figures exultingly brought forward the figure of an old man with a white beard dragged by the neck at the tail of a horse, as showing how the Mongol horsemen behaved towards the Musalmans [Sir H H. Howarth : *History of the Mongols*, London (1876—80) Vol I, p 159]

3 This edict was only withdrawn when it was found that it prevented Muhammadan merchants from visiting the court and that trade suffered in consequence (*Tabaqāt i Nāṣirī* A general history of the Muhammadan dynasties of Asia, by Minhāj ud-dīn Abū 'Umar-i 'Usmān London. 1881, p 1146 and Howarth Vol I, pp 112, 273).

(1246-1248), who left the conduct of affairs entirely to his two Christian ministers and whose court was filled with Christian monks, the Muhammadans were made to suffer great severities[1] . . .

"Arghun (1284-1291) the fourth Ilkhān persecuted the Musalmans and took away from them all posts in the departments of justice and finance, and forbade them to appear at his court [2]

"In spite of all difficulties, however, the Mongols and the savage tribes that followed in their wake[3] were at length brought to submit to the faith of those Muslim peoples whom they had crushed beneath their feet."[4]

Unbelievable and of far-reaching significance, although the conversion of the Mongols to Islam had been, it is also not less surprising that extremely few and scanty records of this glorious achievement are to be found in the annals of the time The names of only a few dedicated saviours of Islam who won proselytes from the savage hordes are known to the world, but their venture was no less daring nor their achievement less significant than the accomplishment of the warriors of the faith Their memory shall always be enriched by the gratitude of Muslims for they had, in reality, performed a great service to the humanity in general and to the Muslims in particular, by diffusing the knowledge of faith among those barbarians, winning them over to the service of one God and making them the standard-bearers of the Apostle of Peace.

After the death of Chenghiz Khan the great heritage of that Mongol conqueror was divided into four dominions headed by the offsprings of his sons. The message of Islam had begun to

1 Howorth, Vol I, p 165

2. C L J De Guignes, Histoire Generale des Huns, des Turcs, des Mogols, (Paris, 1756 58), Vol III, p 265

3 In the thirteenth century, three-fourths of Mongol hosts were Turks (Leon, Cahun, Introduction a l'histoire de l'Asie Turcs et Mongols Paris 1896, p. 279).

4 Arnold, pp 225-227.

spread among all these four sections of the Mongols who were rapidly converted to the faith. In regard to the conversion of the ruling princes in the lineage of Batu, the son of Chenghiz Khan's first born Juji, who ruled the western portion as Khan of the Golden Horde, writes Arnold.

"The first Mongol ruling prince who professed Islam was Baraka Khān, who was chief of the Golden Horde from 1256 to 1267.[1] According to Abū'l-Ghāzi he was converted after he had come to the throne. He is said one day to have fallen in with a caravan coming from Bukhārā, and taking two of the merchants aside, to have questioned them on the doctrines of Islam, and they expounded to him their faith so persuasively that he became converted in all sincerity. He first revealed his change of faith to his youngest brother, whom he induced to follow his example, and then made open profession of his new belief[2]... Baraka Khān entered into a close alliance with the Mamlūk Sultan of Egypt, Rukn al-Din Baybars The initiative came from the latter, who had given a hospitable reception to a body of troops, two hundred in number, belonging to the Golden Horde, these men, observing the growing enmity between their Khān and Hūlāgū, the conqueror of Baghdād, in whose army they were serving, took flight into Syria, whence they were honourably conducted to Cairo to the court of Baybars, who persuaded them to embrace Islam[3]

1 It is of interest to note that Najm al-Din Mukhtār al-Zāhidī in 1260 compiled for Baraka Khān a treatise which gave the proofs of the divine mission of the Prophet, a refutation of those who denied it, and an account of the controversies between Christians and Muslims (Moritz Steinschneider Polemische und apologetische Litteratur in arabischer Sprache, Zwischen Muslimen, Christen und Juden Leipzig, 1877, pp 63 64)

2 Abu'l-Ghāzī Histoire des Mogols et des Tartares par Aboul Ghazi Behādour Khan, traduite par le Baron Desmaisons St Petersburg (1871-74) tome II p 181

3 Maqrīzī Histoire des Sultans Mamlouks de l'Egypte, traduite par M Quatremere (Paris, 1837-45), tome I, pp 180-81, 187

Baybars himself was at war with Hūlāgū, whom he had recently defeated and driven out of Syria. He sent two of the Mongol fugitives, with some other envoys, to bear a letter to Baraka Khān On their return these envoys reported that each princess and amir at the court of Baraka Khān had an imām and a mu'adhdhin, and the children were taught the Qu'ān in the schools [1] These friendly relations between Baybars and Baraka Khān brought many of the Mongols of the Golden Horde into Egypt[2], where they were prevailed upon to become Musalmans "[3]

Halaku had founded the dynasty of Ilkhans in Iran, to which he had later added a great part of Asia Minor Arnold relates the conversion of this branch of Chenghiz Khan's progeny in these words

> "In Persia, where Hūlāgū founded the dynasty of the Ilkhāns, the progress of Islam among the Mongols was much slower In order to strengthen himself against the attacks of Baraka Khān and the Sultan of Egypt, Hūlāgū accepted the alliance of the Christian powers of the East, such as the king of Armenia and the Crusaders His favourite wife was a Christian who favourably disposed the mind of her husband towards her co-religionists, and his son Abāqā Khān married the daughter of the Emperor of Constantinople His brother Takūdār[4], who succeeded him, was the first of the Ilkhāns who embraced Islam He had been brought up as a Christian, for (as a contemporary Christian writer[5] tells us), 'he was baptised when young and called by the name of Nicholas But when he was grown up, through his intercourse with Saracens of whom

1 Maqrizi Histoire des Sultans Mamlouks de l'Egypte, traduite par M Quatremere (Paris, 1837-45) tome I, p 215

2 *Ibid*, p 222

3 Arnold, pp 227-29

4 Wassāf calls him Nikūdār before and Ahmad after his conversion

5 Hayton (Ramusio, tome II, p 60, c)

he was very fond, he became a base Saracen, and, renouncing the Christian faith, wished to be called Muhammad Khān, and strove with all his might that the Tartars should be converted to the faith and sect of Muhammad, and when they proved obstinate, not daring to force them, he brought about their conversion by giving them honours and favours and gifts, so that in his time many Tartars were converted to the faith of the Saracens'. This prince sent the news of his conversion to the Sultan of Egypt in the following letter —'By the power of God Almighty, the mandate of Ahmad to the Sultan of Egypt God Almighty (praised be his name !) by His grace preventing us and by the light of His guidance, hath guided us in our early youth and vigour into the true path of the knowledge of His deity and the confession of His unity, to bear witness that Muhammad (on whom rest the highest blessings !) is the Prophet of God, and to reverence His saints and His pious servants 'Whom God shall please to guide, that man's breast will He open to Islam '[1] We ceased not to incline our heart to the promotion of the faith and the improvement of the condition of Islam and the Muslims, up to the time when the succession to the empire came to us from our illustrious father and brother, and God spread over us the glory of His grace and kindness, so that in the abundance of His favours our hopes were realised, and He revealed to us the bride of the kingdom, and she was brought forth to us a noble spouse Qūrīltāy or general assembly was convened, wherein our brothers, our sons, great nobles, generals of the army and captains of the forces, met to hold council, and they were all agreed on carrying out the order of our elder brother, viz to summon here a vast levy of our troops whose numbers would make the earth, despite its vastness, appear too narrow, whose fury and fierce onset would fill the hearts of men with fear, being animated with a courage before which

1 Qur'ān . vi, 125

the mountain peaks bow down, and a firm purpose that makes the hardest rocks grow soft. We reflected on this their resolution which expressed the wish of all, and we concluded that it ran counter to the aim we had in view—to promote the common weal, i e to strengthen the ordinance of Islam, never, as far as lies in our power, to issue any order that will not tend to prevent bloodshed, remove the ills of men, and cause the breeze of peace and prosperity to blow on all lands, and the kings of other countries to rest upon the couch of affection and benevolence, whereby the commands of God will be honoured and mercy be shown to the people of God. Herein, God inspired us to quench this fire and put an end to these terrible calamities, and make known to those who advanced this proposal (of a levy) what it is that God has put into our hearts to do, namely, to employ all possible means for the healing of all the sickness of the world, and putting off what should only be appealed to as the last remedy For we desire not to hasten to appeal to arms, until we have first declared the right path, and will permit it only after setting forth the truth and establishing it with proofs Our resolve to carry out whatever appears to us good and advantageous has been strengthened by the counsels of the Shaykh al-Islām, the model of divines, who has given us much assistance in religious matters We have appointed our chief justice, Qutb al-Dīn and the Atābak, Bahā al-Dīn, both trustworthy persons of this flourishing kingdom, to make known to you our course of action and bear witness to our good intentions for the common weal of the Muslims, and to make it known that God has enlightened us, and that Islam annuls all that has gone before it, and that God Almighty has put it into our hearts to follow the truth and those who practice it If some convincing proof be required, let men observe our actions. By the grace of God, we have raised aloft the standards of the faith, and borne witness to it in all our orders and our practice, so that the ordinances of

the law of Muhammad may be brought to the fore and firmly established in accordance with the principles of justice laid down by Ahmad Whereby we have filled the hearts of the people with joy, have granted free pardon to all offenders, and shown them indulgences, saying, 'May God pardon the past!' We have reformed all matters concerning the pious endowments of Muslims given for mosques, colleges, charitable institutions, and the rebuilding of caravanserais, we have restored their incomes to those to whom they were due according to the terms laid down by the donors We have ordered the pilgrims to be treated with respect, provision to be made for their caravans and for securing their safety on the pilgrim routes, we have given perfect freedom to merchants, travelling from one country to another, that they may go wherever they please; and we have strictly prohibited our soldiers and police from interfering with them in their comings or goings He seeks the alliance of the Sultan of Egypt 'so that these countries and cities may again be populated, these terrible calamities be put down, the sword be returned to the scabbard, that all peoples may dwell in peace and quietness, and the necks of the Muslims be freed from the ills of humiliation and disgrace'[1]

"To the student of the history of the Mongols it is a relief to pass from the recital of nameless horrors and continual bloodshed to a document emanating from a Mongol prince and giving expression to such humane and benevolent sentiments, which sound strange indeed coming from such lips

" A revolt broke out against him (Takūdār Ahmad), headed by his nephew Arghūn, who compassed his death and succeeded him on the throne During his brief reign (1284-1291), the Christians were once more

1 Wassāf Geschichte persisch herausgegeben und deutsch übersetzt von Hammer-Purgstall (Vienna, 1856) pp 231-34

restored to favour, while the Musalmans had to suffer persecution in their turn, were dismissed from their posts and driven away from the court [1]

"The successors of Takūdār were all heathen, until, in 1295, Ghāzān, the seventh and greatest of the Ilkhāns, became a Musalman and made Islam the ruling religion of Persia

"Ghāzān himself before his conversion had been brought up as a Buddhist and had erected several Buddhist temples in Khurāsān, and took great pleasure in the company of the priests of this faith, who had come into Persia in large numbers since the establishment of the Mongol supremacy over that country [2] He appears to have been naturally of a religious turn of mind, for he studied the creeds of the different religions of his time, and used to hold discussions with the learned doctors of each faith [3] Rashid al-Din, his learned minister and the historian of his reign, maintained the genuineness of his conversion to Islam, the religious observances of which he zealously kept throughout his whole reign, though his contemporaries (and later writers have often re-echoed the imputation) represented [4] him as having only yielded to the solicitations of some Amirs and Shaykhs."[5]

Ibn Kathir also relates, in the chronicles for the year 694 A H , that Ghazan embraced Islam during that year The accounts left by other historians show that the conversion of Ghazan was brought about by a pious Turk, Amir Tuzaun[6] by name Ibn Kathir's version is as follows

"In this year the great-grandson of Chenghiz Khan,

1 C L J de Guignes Histoire generale des Huns des Turcs, des Mogols, (Paris, 1756-58), Vol III, pp 263-65

2 C d'Ohsson Histoire des Mongols, (The Hague 1834-35), tom IV, p 148

3 *Ibid* , p 365

4 *Ibid* , pp 148, 354 , Cahun (op cit) p 434

5 Arnold, pp 229-33

6 Arnold and certain other historians have given his name as Nawruz Beg

Ghazan b. Arghun b Igha b. Tuli b. Chenghiz Khan announced his conversion to the faith of Islam, along with all or a majority of the Tartars under him, through the persuasion of Amir Tuzaun (on whom may rest the peace of God). Pearls, gold and silver balls were showered upon those who declared their allegiance to Islam; the King renamed himself as Mahmūd and attended Friday services, a number of heathen temples and Churches were demolished and poll-tax was levied on them; goods and properties confiscated from Baghdad and other Muslim cities were returned; and justice was restored to them. Rosaries were seen in the hands of Tartars, for which act of benevolence the people thanked God Almighty."[1]

Continuing the account relating to Islamisation of the Mongol's Kingdom of Persia, Arnold writes·

"His (Ghāzān's) brother, Uljāytū, who succeeded him in 1304, under the name of Muhammad Khudābandah, had been brought up as a Christian in the faith of his mother and had been baptised under the name of Nicholas, but after his mother's death, while he was still a young man, he became a convert to Islam through the persuasions of his wife[2] Ibn Batūtah says that his example exercised a great influence on the Mongols.[3] From this time forward Islam became the paramount faith in the Kingdom of the Ilkhāns."[4]

Coming to the story of the spread of Islam in the Middle Kingdom of the Mongols, Arnold says.

"The details that we possess of the progress of Islam in the Middle Kingdom, which fell to the lot of Chaghatay

1 Ibn Kathir, Vol. XIII, p 340

2 Hammer-Purgstall · Geschichte der IIchanen, (Darmstadt 1842-43) Vol II, p. 182

3 Ibn Batūtah · Voyages d'Ibn Batoutah, texte arabe, accompagne d'une traduction par c Defremery et B R Sanguinetti (Paris 1853-58) Vol II, p 57

4. Arnold, p. 234

and his descendants, are still more meagre. Several of the princes of this line had a Muhammadan minister in their service, but they showed themselves unsympathetic to the faith of Islam. Chaghatāy harassed his Muhammadan subjects by regulations that restricted their ritual observances in respect of the killing of animals for food and of ceremonial washings Al-Jūzjānī says that he was the bitterest enemy of the Muslims among all the Mongol rulers and did not wish anyone to utter the word Musalman before him except with evil purpose.[1] Orghana, the wife of his grandson and successor, Qarā-Hūlāgū, brought up her son as a Musalman, and under the name of Mubarak Shāh he came forward in 1264 as one of the claimants of the disputed succession to the Chaghatāy Khānate, but he was soon driven from the throne by his cousin Burāq Khan, and appears to have exercised no influence on behalf of his faith, indeed judging from their names it would not appear that any of his own children even adopted the religion of their father.[2] Burāq Khān is said to have 'had the blessedness of receiving the light of the faith' a few days before his death in 1270, and to have taken the name of Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn,[3] but he was buried according to the ancient funeral rites of the Mongols, and not as a Musalman, and those who had been converted during his reign relapsed into their former heathenism. It was not until the next century that the conversion of Tarmāshirin Khān, about 1326, caused Islam to be at all generally adopted by the Chaghatāy Mongols, who when they followed the example of their chief this time remained true to their new faith

1 Jūzjānī Minhāj-i-Sirāj al-Juzjānī, Tabqāt-i-Nāsirī ed W Nassau Lees (Calcuttta, 1864) pp 381, 397 and Minhāj-ud-Dīn Tabakāt-i-Nāsirī Minhāj-ud-Dīn, Abū-'Umar-i-Usmān (London, 1881) pp 1110, 1145-46.

2 Rashīd al-Dīn, Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh, Tarikh-i-Moubarek-i Ghazani, histoire des Mongols, editee par E Blochet (Gibb Memorial Series, Vol XVIII) (London, 1911) pp 173-74, 188

3 Abu'l-Ghāzi. (op cit) tome II, p 159.

But even now the ascendancy of Islam was not assured, for Būzun who was Khān in the next decade—the chronology is uncertain—drove Tarmāshirīn from his throne, and persecuted the Muslims[1], and it was not until some years later that we hear of the first Musalman King of Kāshgar, which the break-up of the Chaghatāy dynasty had erected into a separate kingdom This prince, Tuqlūq Timūr Khān (1347-1363), is said to have owed his conversion to a holy man from Bukhārā, by name Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn This Shaykh, in company with a number of travellers, had unwittingly trespassed on the game-preserves of the prince, who ordered them to be bound hand and foot and brought before him In reply to his angry question, how they had dared interfere with his hunting, the Shaykh pleaded that they were strangers and were quite unaware that they were trespassing on forbidden ground Learning that they were Persians, the prince said that a dog was worth more than a Persian 'Yes,' replied the Shaykh, 'if we had not the true faith, we should indeed be worse than the dogs' Struck with his reply, the Khān ordered this bold Persian to be brought before him on his return from hunting, and taking him aside asked him to explain what he meant by these words and what was 'faith'. The Shaykh then set before him the doctrines of Islam with such fervour and zeal that the heart of the Khān that before had been hard as a stone was melted like wax, and so terrible a picture did the holy man draw of the state of unbelief, that the prince was convinced of the blindness of his own errors, but said, 'Were I now to make profession of the faith of Islam, I should not be able to lead my subjects into the true path But bear with me a little. and when I have entered into the possession of the kingdom of my forefathers, come to me again' For the empire of Chaghatāy had by this time been broken up into a number of petty princedoms, and it was

1 Ibn Batutah, (op cit) tome III, p 47

many years before Tūqluq Timūr succeeded in uniting under his sway the whole empire as before Meanwhile Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn had returned to his home, where he fell dangerously ill · when at the point of death, he said to his son Rashīd al-Dīn, 'Tuqlūq Timūr will one day become a great monarch ; fail not to go and salute him in my name and fearlessly remind him of the promise he made me' Some years later, when Tuqlūq Timūr had re-won the empire of his fathers, Rashīd al-Dīn made his way to the camp of the Khān to fulfil the last wishes of his father, but in spite of all his efforts he could not gain an audience of the Khān. At length he devised the following expedient: One day in the early morning, he began to chant the call to prayers, close to the Khān's tent Enraged at having his slumbers disturbed in this way, the prince ordered him to be brought into his presence, whereupon Rashīd al-Dīn delivered his father's message Tuqlūq Khān was not unmindful of his promise, and said · 'Ever since I ascended the throne I have had it on my mind that I made that promise, but the person to whom I gave the pledge never came Now you are welcome' He then repeated the profession of faith and became a Muslim. 'On that morn the sun of bounty rose out of the east of divine favour and effaced the dark night of unbelief"[1]

Certain Turk historians have related the story of Tuqluq Timur's conversion in greater detail and reported the dialogue verbatim between him and Jamāl ud-dīn Tuqluq Timur had enquired, pointing out towards his dog, whether he (Jamāl ud-dīn) was better than the beast. Jamāl ud-dīn calmly replied, "If I pass away from this world with my faith intact, I would be better than the dog, if not, the dog would be better than me." Taken aback by this reply, Tuqlāq Timūr asked what he meant by 'faith.' And thus he was eventually led to embrace Islam as related by Arnold It is thus certain that a word uttered by Jamāl ud-dīn in all

1. Arnold, pp. 234-36

sincerity was the ultimate cause of the conversion of Tuqluq Timur and of the spread of Islam in his realm: a feat which could not have perhaps been accomplished by a thousand speeches or the might of arms

Turning to the spread of Islam among that branch of the Golden Horde which was succeeded by Ogotāy, the third son of Chenghiz Khan, and under which Kubilay Khan later brought the whole of China, Arnold says:

> "Scattered up and down throughout the length and breadth of the Mongol empire, there must have been many of the followers of the Prophet who laboured successfully and unknown, to win unbelievers to the faith. In the reign of Ogotāy (1229-1241), we read of a certain Buddhist governor of Persia, named Kurguz, who in his later years abjured Buddhism and became a Musalman.[1] In the reign of Timūr Khān (1323-1328), Ānanda, a grandson of Qūbilāy and viceroy of Kan-Su, was a zealous Musalman and had converted a great many persons in Tangut and won over a large number of the troops under his command to the same faith He was summoned to court and efforts were made to induce him to conform to Buddhism, and on his refusing to abandon his faith he was cast into prison But he was shortly after set at liberty, for fear of an insurrection among the inhabitants of the Tangut,[2] who were much attached to him."[3]

In this way Islam won over, in a short time, its most inveterate enemy who had trampled underfoot the entire Islamic world, and whose onslaught, for a time, no Muslim power was able to withstand Islam again proved that it possessed an irresistible charm which can captivate the hearts of its bitterest foe. The Mongols, after accepting the faith of Islam, produced a large number of

1. C d' Ohsson, (op cit), Vol III, p. 121
2. Rashid al-Din, (op cit), pp 600-602
3. Arnold p 227

scholars, theologians and doctors of faith as well as those who fought for the cause of God, and served to defend Islam on many a critical occasion Iqbāl has rightly said :

"A sign manifest did adduce the charge of Tartar hordes,
That defenders ere flock to Kaʿabah from the heathen brutes."[1]

1 *Bāng-i-Dara*, p 230.

CHAPTER XIII

MAULANA JALAL UD-DIN RUMI

The Crisis of Rationalism:

By the time the seventh century of the Muslim era began, dialectics had come to occupy such a pride of place among the religious sciences that nobody could lay a claim to scholarship unless he had mastered the controversial issues between the Muʿtazilites and the Ashʿarites, on the one hand, and between the Ashʿarites and the Hanbalites, on the other. Fakhr ud-din al-Rāzi, who died in 606 A H , had attracted all minds so powerfully that the human intellect had come to be acknowledged by all as the infallible touchstone for the verification of metaphysical truths A compromise between reason and faith, which was regarded as the ultimate end by the scholars of the time. had made them so fond of ratiocination that no religious dogma or tenet of faith was acceptable to them unless it could be established by rational arguments, logical syllogism and philosophical premises

It is true that the Ashʿarites had succeeded in building up a powerful system of Islamic scholasticism which gained the day against *ʿitzāl* and philosophy but they had, nevertheless, imbibed the spirit of these sciences The system of metaphysical theology evolved by the Ashʿarites had a deep rationalistic foundation which allowed reason to delve into the questions relating to the nature and attributes of God and to discuss metaphysical issues as freely as did the Philosophers and Muʿtazilites As a consequence, naturally, they had also come to regard the conceptual data furnished by the human senses as the most reliable criterion for verification of certitude They had thus accepted logical reasoning and speculative thinking as the cornerstone for building up their

arguments for the affirmation of the religious tenets and finding out the ultimate Reality.

The religious scholars throughout the Islamic world had, as a result, been seized by an excessive formalism of dialectics, which, too, had by then deteriorated into a stale science handed down from generation to generation without any addition or modification. It had been unable to produce for quite a long time a celebrated thinker like Abul Hasan al-Ashʿari or Abū Hamid al-Ghazali. The constant engagement of the then scholars with polemics and logical disputation might have made them bright and quick-witted but it had certainly extinguished the warmth of their hearts and dimmed the light of faith and conviction. The dialecticians had undoubtedly been successful in silencing their opponents by their superior syllogism but they were unable to provide an unflinching conviction which could replace scepticism by faith and disquietude by peace of mind. As a matter of fact, the logical reasoning employed by the dialecticians had given rise to numerous questions which could never be adequately met by the scholastics Also, the dialectics had no place for 'intution' which is an unvaluable source for acquisition of knowledge, for, it either did not recognise any 'inner sense' beyond the normal senses of perception or treated it with contempt Obviously, therefore, facts pertaining to mysteries of mute reality and ecstasy were being contended simply because these were beyond the ken of senses; the scholars had developed a predisposition for rejecting or at least being sceptical about everything which could not be proved through rational arguments. The *Ummat*, having thus been seized by the so-called rationalism, was losing that fervour of faith which had been bequeathed to it by the Apostles and the elects of God, and which constituted a fountain-head of its strength for all times to come. Philosophical discourses and dialectical argumentations had turned the people into academicians as dry as dust, lacking that warmth of feeling and certitude of knowledge which is born out of divine intuition. There were, nevertheless, a few sublimated souls, pure of heart and beatified by divine grace; but, the overwhelming majority of the doctors of faith and the laity had become votaries of intellect, fond

so extremely learned that difficult problems pertaining to law and religion were referred to him for solution. His erudition had earned for him the honorific title of *Sultan ul-ʿUlema* (the king of scholars) while he used to hold his assemblies like the courts of monarchs His discourses ran from morning till mid-day for all and sundry, and after the mid-day prayers, for the selected few to whom he expounded the mysteries of the true content of knowledge and faith On Fridays and Mondays he delivered public sermons He had an imposing countenance and always appeared to be engrossed in his thoughts.

Early Education :

Jalal ud-dīn Rūmi was born on the 6th of Rabi ul-Awwal, 604 A H Baha' ud-dIn Veled entrusted him to the care of one of his disciples, Sayyid Burhan ud-dIn, for early education who taught him for four or five years in the beginning and then guided him again, after the death of Baha' ud-dIn Veled, in the secrets of the mystic path

Migration from Balkh :

The popularity of Baha' ud-dIn Veled and the great number of his disciples and followers had made certain scholars jealous of him In his lectures, he used to declaim publicly against the Greek philosophers and their rationalist followers, who, he said, had thrown the scriptures over their back, and could not, therefore, hope for the blessings of God. These scholars could not, however, harm him as Khwarism Shah was himself a devotee of Baha' ud-dIn Veled Once the king who had come to pay a visit to the Sheikh remarked, "What a big crowd has gathered here!" One of the scholars present at the moment readily added, "Yes, and if something is not done to check his popularity, it might become difficult for the King to rule over them" Khwarism Shah took the remark to his heart and asked the scholar as to what should be done in the matter The courtier, seizing the opportunity to malign the Sheikh, advised the king to send the keys of the treasury and also of the citadel to Baha' ud-dIn Veled with a

message that since he already reigned over the hearts of the people, it would be better if he had the keys as well.[1]

When this message was conveyed to Baha' ud-din Veled, he replied, "Convey my respects to the King and tell him that I am a recluse having nothing to do with the treasures and arms. I would willingly leave the country so that the king may rule over it without any misgivings on this score. I would leave the town on Friday after delivering the last sermon."

The inhabitants of Balkh were so much agitated at the news of Baha' ud-din's departure that the Khwarism Shah had to come along with his vizier to dissuade him from his intended migration. Baha' ud-din Veled, however, did not accede to the request made by the King who ultimately proposed that in order to avoid any tumult or agitation among the masses, Baha' ud-din might leave the city without letting people know of it. Baha' ud-din agreed to the suggestion He delivered his last sermon on Friday and quitted Balkh on the succeeding Saturday In his public discourse he warned the King that the Tartar hordes would invade his kingdom soon after his departure [2]

The people everywhere on his way, hearing of his arrival,

1 A number of historians have attributed this conversation with the King to Imām Fakhr ud-dīn Rāzi Qadi Talammuz Husain, however, holds it to be a mistake on the part of chroniclers, for Baha' ud-din Veled left Balkh in 609 or 610 A H while Fakhr ud-dīn Rāzi died at Herat in 606 A H, where he had been residing before he died (*Sahib ul-Mathnavi*, pp 46/48) Another biographer of Jalal ud-dīn Rūmi, Badi Uz-zaman Farozanfar, whose book entitled "The life of Maulana Jalal ud-dīn Muhammad" has been published recently in Iran, also subscribes to the abovementioned view of Talammuz Husain (Farozanfar, p 14)

Talammuz Husain has expressed the view that this man might have been Sayyid Baha' ud-dīn Rāzi who was a courtier of Khwarism Shah, and who has been mentioned in the Tabqāt-i-Nāsiri (pp 270/71)

2 Badi Uz-zaman Farozanfar has expressed the view that it is possible that the real cause of Baha' ud-din Veled's migration was the impending danger of Tartar invasion of Khurasān and Iran since many other *'ulema* and notable persons were then leaving these countries for other places of safety. (Farozanfar, p 15)

flocked to meet him and bring him into their cities with honour. Thus he passed through Baghdad, Mecca, Damascus and reached Malatia,[1] where he remained for four years, engaged in preaching and teaching. From Malatia, Baha' ud-din Veled went on to Āk Shahr,[2] and from there to Larenda[3] which was a dependency of Konya.[4]

Arrival in Konya :

'Ala ud-din Kaikabād, the then Sultan of Rūm[5], sent for and requested Baha' ud-din Veled to come to his Capital, where he arrived in 626 A. H. The Sultan himself went to receive Baha' ud-din and became his disciple along with his chiefs. In Konya, Baha' ud-din resided in a local college and died there after two years in 628 A. H.

Rūmi accompanied his father throughout the latter's journey from Balkh, and he was 22 years of age when he arrived at Konya. Impressed by Baha' ud-din's profound knowledge and erudition, the Sultan's teacher, Badr ud-din Gohartash, founded a college named Madarsa-i-Khudavandgār for him and endowed it richly for its maintenance.[6]

Sultan 'Ala ud-din Kaikabād had a great regard for Baha' ud-din Veled When the Sultan had erected the fort of Konya he invited Baha' ud-din Veled to mount to the terraced roof of the fort, thence to survey the walls and towers. After his inspection, Baha' ud-din remarked to the Sultan, "Against the floods and enemy horses, you have raised a goodly defence But what protection have you built against those unseen arrows, the sighs and moans of the oppressed, which pass through a thousand walls and battlements, and sweep whole worlds to destruction. Go and erect a citadel of justice and equity, for that alone can ensure

1 A city on the Upper Euphrates
2 Capital of a province of Konya
3 A city in Asia Minor
4. i e Iconium in Galatia
5. i e. Anatolia in modern Turkey
6. Afiaki, p 30

the peace of the world."[1]

After the death of Baha' ud-din Veled, Rūmi was raised to occupy the seat of his father by the Sultan of Konya on the advice of the scholars and disciples of the departed teacher. Rūmi thus started teaching in the college and preaching to the people in place of his father. Later, Saiyd Burhan ud-din, the tutor during his childhood, who had migrated to Tirmiz came back to Konya Rūmi received instruction in the mystic lore from Saiyid Burhan ud-din who lived in Konya for nine years and died there in 637 A H

Travels for further Education:

In 630 A. H. Rumi went forth to Syria for further education. He arrived at Halcb (Aleppo) where Sultan al-Malik al-Zāhir[2] had established, on the advice of Cadi Baha' ud-din ibn Shaddād, several colleges in 591 A. H., which had made Haleb also a reputed place of learning like Damascus

In Haleb Rūmi stayed in Madarsa Halāwiyah and received education from Kamāl ud-din ibn al-ʿAdim. Although Rūmi was receiving education at Haleb, difficult juristic questions were referred to him for solution. Sipah Salār reports that Rūmi not only furnished a solution to all such problems but also gave reasons which were not to be found in any book.

Rūmi went to Damascus from Haleb and dwelt in Madarsa Maqdasyah. In Damascus, reports Sipah Salār, Rūmi used to confer with Sheikh Mohi ud-din ibn ʿArabi, Sheikh Saʿad ud-din Hamawi, Sheikh ʿUthman Rūmi, Sheikh Auhad ud-din Kirmāni and Sheikh Sadr ud-din Konwi[4]

In 634 or 635 A. H. Rūmi returned to Konya and resumed the profession of teaching. He continued to do so till the death of his mentor, Saiyid Burhan ud-din, in 637 A. H. Soon thereafter, Sheikh Mohi ud-din ibn ʿArabi died in Damascus in 638 A. H., and a number of scholars and mystics moved on from Damascus

1 Aflāki, p. 37.
2 Son of Sultan Salah ud-dīn
3. Sipah Salār, p 16 and Aflāki, p. 52
4 Sipah Salār, p 14

to seek the company of Rūmi in Konya. Sheikh Sadr ud-din and a large number of other scholars whose hearths and homes had been destroyed by the Mongols were too seeking refuge in Konya which had thus attracted quite a large number of celebrated scholars and doctors of faith reputed for their learning and piety. Rūmi, still busy in teaching at the Madarsa, where he is reported to have more than 400 students under his tutelage, was head and shoulders above all the other scholars.

The other pursuits of Rūmi, besides teaching, were preaching in meetings held for the purpose and giving juristic-opinion on the questions referred to him. Fifteen *Dinars* were fixed for him, it is reported, as a remuneration for this public service. He was so particular in this regard that he had instructed his attendants to inform him immediately on the receipt of questions eliciting juristic-opinion, even if he were in a devotional seclusion or trance, and take the dictation for sending a reply.

Rūmi Turns to Mysticism:

Rūmi spent his days in this manner till 642 A. H when an incident completely transformed his life and turned him from Jalāl ud-din Konwi to Maulana-i-Rūm. This was his meeting with Shamsh Tebrez and his devotion and adoration of the latter. The Maulana has himself said:

"The lord of Rūm did not become a learned sage;
Until he had become a bondsman of Shamsh Tebrez."

Shamsh Tebrez:

Muhammad ibn ʿAli ibn Malik Dād was his name but he was commonly known as Shamsh Tebrez. His ancestry is shrouded in mystery and the place to which he belonged is also not known with certainty. Of the many charges levelled against him, one was that he belonged to an unknown descent [1] It was said of him that:

"Who is he and what his father was?
Does anybody know? Er, he comes from where?"

1 A few historians consider him to be the son of Jalāl ud-din Hasan, a pontiff of the Ismailiyah sect, who renounced the cult of the famous

He is reported to have been gifted with a keen intellect and a fervour of love since his very childhood It has been related in *Manāqib al-ʿArifin*[1] that while still young, he often remained so immersed in the love for the Prophet that he did not feel the pangs of hunger for as many as thirty to forty days[2] After he had mastered the exoteric sciences he became a disciple of Sheikh Abū Bakr, the basket maker Some chroniclers report that he had taken Sheikh Zain ud-din Sanjāsi[3] as his spiritual mentor while the names of certain other mystics have been mentioned in other reports. May be he received a grounding in the mystic lore from all these from time to time

Not content with the esoteric teachings of "the Path" he has had from his tutors, Shamsh Tebrez took to extensive travels in various lands, in search of the best spiritual teacher and thus gained the nickname of *Parinda* (the Flier, Bird, etc). In his travels he took care to conceal his own spiritual attainments. Pretending to be a wealthy merchant, he wore a black felt and always bolted the doors of his room in the inn, with a costly lock, although there was nothing inside except a tattered mat He travelled in this way to Tebrez, Baghdad, Jordan, Rome, Qaisaryah and Damascus He used to weave strings with which trousers are fastened, and this was enough to meet his frugal expenses He lived for one year in Damascus where he did not take more than a cup of soup once a week ' Often he prayed to God for a companion

"Assassins" and adopted the orthodox faith He was accordingly known as a *Nau-Muslim* (the recently converted Muslim) These reports are, however of doubtful authenticit For detailed study *see*, "The Life of Maulana Jalal ud-din Muhammad" (pp 53-54) by Brdi Uzzaman Farozanfar and *Sahib ul-Mashnet* (pp 127-128) by Qadi Talammuz Husain

1 Written by Shamsh ud-din Ahmad al-Aflāki in 752 A H

2 Aflāki, p 370

3 Ferozanfar has given the name of his mentor as Ruku ud-din Sanjāsi instead of Zain ud-din Sanjāsi He also says that Sanjās was a dependency of Zanjān but he is not sure about it (Farozanfar, p 56)

4 Sipah Salār, p 63

with whom he could share the mysteries of divine love.[1]

Meeting of Shamsh Tebrez and Rūmi :

The spiritual mentor of Shamsh Tebrez, it is related, asked him to proceed to Rūm and illuminate a broken-hearted soul yearning for the divine love. He accordingly reached Konya on the 26th of Jamadi ul-Ākhir, 642 A. H. and engaged a lodging in an inn. One day, he saw Rūmi coming by, riding on a mule, in the midst of a crowd of students and disciples accompanying him on foot. Shamsh Tebrez stepped forward and asked Rūmi, "What is the object of learning and prayer ?" "It is to know," replied Rūmi, "the *Sharᶜah* and its tenets." "No", rejoined Shamsh Tebrez, "the object is to attain what is knowable". Thereafter he recited this couplet of Hakīm Sinā'i :

"Compared to that knowledge, ignorance is better ;
Which allows your self to remain as it were."

Rūmi was lost in amazement. He had taken to heart the remark of Shamsh Tebrez.[2]

Rūmi now took Shamsh Tebrez home with him. They remained closeted together, reports Aflāki, for forty days where no body could enter.[3] Sipah Salār, another biographer of Rūmi, writes that both remained in holy communion for six months in a room where none dared to enter except Sheikh Salah ud-dīn.[4]

The company of Shamsh Tebrez opened a new vista of the hidden realm to the view of Rūmi who now felt a trenchant urge to grasp the mysteries of earth and of heaven through spiritual

1 Aflāki, pp 58-59

2 The conversation between Rūmi and Shamsh Tebrez has been reported in Tarkirah Daulat Shah The author of the Life of Jalāl ud-dīn Muhammad has also collected all the traditions in this regard but none being acceptable to him, he has put forth the view that the attachment of Rūmi to Shamsh Tebrez was not due to any sudden rapturous infactuation but because Rūmi was already in search of an illuminated soul (Furozanfar, pp 01-68) Also see *Sahib al-Mathnavi*, pp 139-142

3 Aflāki, p 60

4 Sipah Salār, p 66

illumination Rūmi says in a couplet :

"Shamsh Tebrez was it, who led me to the path of Reality;
For the faith I have is simply his bounty."

Rūmi had so long been a profound scholar and a successful teacher, disciples and students, many of them scholars and mystics, always gathered round him in large numbers to drink at the fountain of learning, but, now, he himself became a pupil of Shamsh Tebrez Sultan Veled, the son of Rūmi says.

"The Sheikh himself turned a probationer,
He began to learn his lessons afresh, sitting at the feet of his mentor.
Although perfect he was in ascetic lore,
He had to begin taking lessons once more"

Rūmi has also acknowledged it in these lines

"A mendicant I was, thou madest me a libertine,
A source of tumult, intoxicated with wine
Revered I was as a doctor of religion,
Thou hast turned me into a sport for children."

The result was that Rūmi abandoned teaching as well as sermonising He says

"Like Mercury had I ledgers of mine,
Upon which I devoted much time,
Lo! no sooner did I glance the forehead of the cupbearer,
So intoxicated I became that I broke my pen"

Tumult by Rūmi's Disciples:

After Rūmi had entered the enchanted circle of Shamsh Tebrez's spiritual powers, he gave up teaching and delivering lectures which was intensely resented by his followers, disciples and friends They, accordingly, raised a fearful and threatening tumult against Shamsh The resentment of Rūmi's disciples was kindled by the respect paid to Snamsh by Rūmi, and they were also jealous that an unknown person whose lineage and even whereabouts were not known to anybody should cause their revered

teacher to severe all relations with those who had so long been serving as well as derıvıng benefit from him, and spreading his fame far and wide. The dısciples and followers of Rūmi took Shamsh Tebrez for a weired figure who had cast a spell over Rūmi otherwıse he would not have changed so suddenly and decided not to see hıs old acquaintances. They could not express their resentment against Shamsh ın the presence of Rūmu but whenever they got an opportunity they jibbed and stingingly reproached Shamsh Tebrez.

Departure of Shamsh Tebrez:

Shamsh Tebrez calmly put up with the ırritatıon caused by Rūmi's followers for some time but when he found that they were bent upon taking resort to violent means, he stealthily left Konya one day Aflāki reports that Shamsh Tebrez left Konya, at the end of hıs first vısıt, on Thursday, the twenty-first day of the month of Shawwal, 643 A.H.,[1] after a stay of about sixteen months.

The departure of Shamsh Tebrez left Rūmı in such a state of dıstress and depressıon that he completely cut humself off from all the dısciples and acquaintances, frıends and relatives. This was an unexpected turn of events unforseen by those who had been envious of Shamsh, for Rūmi was now not prepared to see even those who had not opposed Shamsh, much less the persons who had been hıs adversarıes

Return of Shamsh Tebrez:

Sipah Salār relates that Rumi remained cut off from every body tıll he unexpectedly received a letter from Shamsh Tebrez from Damascus.[2] A bit calmed down, Rūmi now permitted those who had not pitted themselves against Shamsh to join in his sittings It was durmg this perıod that Rūmi began to take part ın musical chantings ın remembrance of his lost friend. He also wrote four letters to Shams Tebrez during thıs period of separation,

1. Aflāki, p 60
2 *Ibid*, p 66

which express his intense desire to see Shamsh again In the first letter he says

"Come back to me, the light of my heart, the object of my desire
Thou forges ahead with the fervour of thy true love.
If thou comest, the joy of my heart shall I acquire
If not, extreme depression will be my hire
Thou art like the sun, which is far away but still near,
Come back, Oh, thou art at a distance, but I find thee here."

Gradually the antagonism against Shamsh Tebrez subsided and then Rūmi took steps to invite him back to Konya again He sent his son, Sultan Veled, to bear a letter to Shamsh Tebrez and assure him on behalf of his disciples and followers that all of them, who had earlier opposed him, were repenting their mistake and wanted to be forgiven Rūmi's letter to Shamsh expresses his heart-felt grief over the separation with his spiritual guide He wrote

"From the time thou hast departed from me, as wax is separated from honey,
Like a candle I melt in the fire of love, deprived of thy sweetness,
Separated from thy illustrious self, I have been turned into a ruin,
Wherein my soul resides alone in wilderness
Turn the reins of thy mount, I implore, turn the mount of thy joy (this way),
For music is not lawful unto me in thy absence, I hate the joy as a devil
Not a single ode could I indite, till a letter to me did ye write
To read thy letter, I was so over-joyed; lyrics I composed six or five
O' God, let us meet again to turn my eve into morn,
For thou art indeed the pride of Syria, Armenia and Rome."

Sultan Veled conducted Shamsh Tebrez to Konya from Damascus like a prince

Shamsh Tebrez Departs again:

Rūmi was overjoyed to see Shamsh Tebrez for the second time. All those who had been discourteous to Shamsh requested him to condone their mistakes. For a time Shamsh and Rūmi passed their time happily in spiritual and religious disquisitions, divine manifestations and ecstasies, and the fervour of Rūmi's love for Shamsh increasing with the passage of time. However, Rūmi's disciples began to resent again their neglect by Rūmi, as they had done before Another incident happened in the meantime which added fuel to the fire. Shamsh was putting up with his wife in an outer room of the house in which Rūmi dwelt. Chelebi 'Ala' ud-din, the son of Rūmi by his second wife, used to pass through the room of Shamsh, whenever he visited his father, and thus caused inconvenience to the Sheikh. Shamsh politely asked 'Ala' ud-din on several occasions not to do so which was, however, resented by him 'Ala' ud-din also viewed with jealousy the affection showed by Shamsh Tebrez to his step-brother, Sultan Veled, and, therefore, he gave vent to his feelings before such followers of Rūmi as were inimical to Shamsh. They immediately seized the opportunity to malign Shamsh Tebrez and again raised a storm of protest against him.

Shamsh Tebrez did not, at first, mention the matter to Rūmi but when the hostilities of these people increased, he alluded to his embarrassment in the form of an anecdote. He also hinted that this time he would slip away without leaving any trace of him. It appears from certain verses of Rūmi that he was not completely unaware of what was going to happen, for he had entreated Shamsh Tebrez in some of his verses to give up the idea of deserting him again.

However, the followers of Rūmi again rose in opposition to Shamsh with the result that he slipped away from Konya.[1]

1. It has been mentioned in certain chronicles that Shamsh was put to death by certain persons in Konya and Rūmi, on receiving the news said, "God

Rūmı says ın a couplet:

"That there be no room for any complaınt, Suddenly he set out to quit them all"

Rūmi's Impatience:

When Rūmi found Shamsh mıssıng agaın one morning, hıs distress knew no bounds He ımmedıately went to Sultan Veled and crıed out, "Sleepest thou, Get up and find out where the Sheikh ıs? I find my soul devoıd of his fragrance again."[1]

Now Rūmi again started his search for Shamsh, he was now even more dıstressed than he had been earlıer. He ceased all intercourse with those who had caused ıll-will to Shamsh and even forbade them to appear before hım Rūmi says:

"The separation made hım mad ın love,
Lıke Jonah he became, without a hearth or home."

A few days later when his quest for Shamsh had proved fruitless, Rūmı became even more restless Now he spent most of hıs tıme either ın listenıng to the musical recitals or lamenting and raisıng a waıl of woe for the departed companion It was durıng this perıod that Rūmı composed a number of beautıful and extremely touchıng lyrics expressıng the agonısing pangs suffered by hım due to Shamsh's seperatıon

Thıs was the year 645 A H Rūmı was extremely anxıous for Shamsh specially because of the disturbed condıtıons ın Egypt and Asıa Mınor and the tempest of rapine and slaughter let loose by the Tartar invasıon. If anybody gave hım the whereabouts of Shamsh, Rūmı would be so pleased that he ımmedıately rewarded hım with whatever he could lay hıs hands upon ıncludıng even the garments he wore at the time

does what He lıkes and orders whatever He ıntends" Farozanfar, however, prefers the versıon that Rūmı was nearest to Shamsh, and, naturally, he should have been aware of what had happened to Shamsh Thus, had Shamsh been killed ın Konya, Rūmı would not have undertaken the journey to Damascus ın hıs quest (Farozanfar, pp 83-84)

1. Sıpah Salār, p 69

Travels to Syria:

Not being able to calm down his restlessness, Rūmi set out for Damascus along with a few of his other companions in search of Shamsh Tebrez. He was received with honour by the scholars of Damascus but they were surprised to learn that a person of his intellectual stature and erudition should be so agitated for any individual.

Rūmi could not, however, get any trace of Shamsh Tebrez in Damascus When he was worn out of his quest for Shamsh, he remarked, "Myself and Shamsh are not two If he is like the sun, I am a particle, if he is an ocean, I am a drop, for the particle is illuminated by the sun and the drop owes its existence to the ocean. There is thus no difference between Shamsh and myself." Rūmi returned to Konya from Damascus but his restlessness did not abate. After a couple of years he again undertook a journey to Damascus but he returned this time convinced that in reality he was himself Shamsh and that all his search for Shamsh was no more than a quest to find out his own self

After coming back from Damascus for the second time, Rūmi gave up all hopes to meet Shamsh Tebrez again. Nevertheless, Rūmi now experienced the same effulgence of spiritual wisdom streaming in his own self which he had sought in Shamsh Tebrez. "Although the Maulana, on whom be the blessings of God", says Sultan Veled, "failed to find out the person of Shamsh ud-din Tebrez, whose fame may be spread by God, in Damascus, he found whatever he wanted from Shamsh, percolating in his own veins".

Sheikh Salah ud-dīn, the gold-beater.

A few days after his return from Damascus for the second time, Rūmi again became restless He now promoted Sheikh Salah ud-din as his confidant and chief assistant He was, in fact, elevated to take the place of Shamsh Tebrez,[1] as Sultan Veled says

1 Farozanfar writes "When Rūmi became despaired of finding out Shamsh, he turned his mind towards Salah ud-din whole-heartedly He nominated him as his Sheikh and Caliph and appointed him as the leader of the

in these verses:

"After Shamsh, Salah ud-dīn became his helper in this design·
His presence increased the illuminations and visions Divine,
For he learnt the lore mysterious from him"

Sheikh Salah ud-dīn came of a poor family belonging to a nearby village. His father was a fisherman while Salah ud-dīn had himself taken up the profession of gold-beating Reputed as a trustworthy youngman from his early days, he had been a disciple of Saiyid Burhān ud-dīn After Saiyid Burhān ud-dīn's death he took the oath of allegiance to Rūmī whose closest associate he remained during the last ten years of his life He died on the first of Muharram, 657 A H

Elevation of Salah ud-dīn as the most trusted disciple and spiritual successor of Rūmī, again made his other disciples and followers run amuck Now their complaint was that Shamsh was at least an educated person but this man, who was a mere gold-beater by profession, did not deserve to be the chief assistant of their respected teacher They were amazed to see that Rūmī held Salah ud-dīn in such a high esteem, and this fired their envy again However, when Salah ud-dīn came to know of the tumult among other disciples he remarked 'They deplore my selection as the chief associate of the Maulana but they don't appear to understand that the Maulana is really in love with his own self I simply act as a veil to conceal this fact"[1]

seekers of God and instructed his friends and disciples to obey him" (Farozanfar, p 101)

1 Farozanfar writes The Maulana being tired of the blind envy of the malicious detractors of Salah ud-dīn, made him the cynosure of his eyes and showed him the same love and affection which he had for Shamsh As Salah ud-dīn had been a soft-hearted man, his attraction and guidance were of a different nature He was able to decrease the tumultous restlessness of the Maulana to a large extent (Farozanfar, pp 102-103)

Chelebi Hisām ud-dīn:

After the death of Salah ud-din, Chelebi[1] Hisām ud-din Turk was nominated by Rūmi to act as his chief assistant, confidant and spiritual vicegerent in place of the deceased friend. Chelebi Hisām ud-din had already occupied a distinguished place among the followers of Rūmi, and for eleven years after the demise of his spiritual superior, he acted as his successor He was a Turk belonging to Armenia and came of a respectable and influential family known as Akhi.[2]

Hisām ud-dīn had also paid obeisance to Shamsh Tebrez and Salah ud-dīn from whom he had learnt the esoteric teachings

Hisām ud-dīn spent all his belongings on Rūmi and ultimately emancipated his slaves as well He was so cautious that he never used the water of the Maulana's bath-room for ablutions out of respect for him, and went to his own house for the purpose even if it was biting cold On the other hand, Rūmi too paid such a homage to Hisām ud-dīn that one thought him to be a disciple of the latter [3]

Composition of the Mathnawi:

The Mathnawi was composed by Rūmi during this period at the instance of Hisām ud-dīn [4]

1 Chelebi is an equivalent of Sayyid in Turkish language (Farozanfar, p 111).

2 Farozanfar says that Chelebi Hisām ud-dīn was born in 622 A H (Farozanfar, p 111)

3 Rūmi sent whatever presents he received to Chelebi Hisām ud-dīn Once Sultan Veled complained about it but Rūmi replied, "By God, if a hundred-thousand pious men were caught by trouble and it were apprehended that the world would perish, and I had only a loaf with me, I would send even that to the respected Chelebi," Rūmi used to keep silence whenever Hisām ud-dīn was not present in his meetings His followers, therefore, always tried to cause Hisām ud-dīn to be present in these meetings (Farozanfar, p. 114)

4 Farozanfar writes that the Mathnawi was composed by Rūmi on the request of Hisām ud-din The latter had noticed the disciples and followers of Rūmi devoting their time to the study of *Hadiqa* of Sinā'i and the *Mantaqut Tayr* of 'Attār because they could not find mystical lores in the odes of Rūmi

The fact is that Rūmi was endowed with a love so fervent and rapturous that he could not do without a close companion and confidant with whom he could share the mysteries of the esoteric truth experienced by him First, he selected Shamsh Tebrez whose place was taken by Salah ud-dīn and Hisām ud-dīn one after another. Saiyid Burhan ud-dīn was also elevated to his circle of selected associates, although in a different capacity, for a short while. The period of five years between the death of Saiyid Burhan ud-dīn and the arrival of Shamsh Tebrez in Konya was spent by Rūmi in such a way as if he felt some deficiency in his life It is obvious that the latent capabilities with which Rūmi had been endowed required a stimulant for their expression The Mathnawi is itself a proof of Rūmi's yearning for love, if one is required, for it would not have come into existence without the spiritual fervour aroused by Rūmi's favourite associates There had been a gap of two years in the compilation of the Mathnawi when Rūmi suspended its composition on account of the Hisām ud-dīn's grief at the death of his wife

Perfection in the 'Path' of mysticism or spiritual illumination was not the reason for selection of his confidants by Rūmi He often said that love is born out of affinity. Once, in reply to a

which, nevertheless, displayed his fervour of love He, therefore, sought and found an opportunity to propose that Rūmi might indite something in the style of the above mentioned lyrics Rūmi immediately produced a paper from his turban on which were written 18 verses, the first of which was to become the opening verse of the Mathnawi It ran as follows

"From reed flute hear what tale it tells,
What plaint it makes of absence ills,"

And, the last verse ran

"Now ends my discourse, peace be to ye"

Rūmi used to dictate the verses to Hisām ud-dīn who took them down and then recited these aloud in his beautiful voice Often they spent whole nights at the task After the first part of the Mathnawi was completed Hisām ud-dīn's wife died which made him very despondent Rūmi too felt so aggrieved by the dejection of Hisām ud-dīn that the composition of Mathnawi was suspended for two years Thereafter, Rūmi again took up the task continuing it for the next fifteen years till his death (Farozanfar, pp 116-118)

question he told his son, Sultan Veled, that he cultivated friendship with his associates because of affinity, for the affection born out of it never leads one to remorse. True affinity or love, explained Rūmi, would never cause repentance either in this world or the Hereafter. Those who cultivate friendship for selfish ends would, in the Hereafter, languish with a longing described thus by the Qur'ān: *Alas for me! Ah, would that I had never taken such an one for friend.*[1] On the other hand, those who are sincere and fear God shall retain their friendship. *Friends on that day will be foes one to another, save those who kept their duty (to Allah).*[2]

Rumi has expressed the same view in a verse which says.

"Never from miracles, a faith sprouts;
Yet, qualities alike, affinity unites"

Death of Rūmi:

Sipah Salār relates that Konya was continuously rocked by earthquakes for forty days before the death of Rūmi[3] Aflāki, however, says that while Rūmi still lay in sickness, there were severe earthquakes for seven days and nights, until everyone in Konya was greatly alarmed. When the people went to Rūmi to beseech his help, he calmly remarked: "Poor earth, it is starving and wants a fat morsel. It shall soon have one and then it won't bother you."[4] During his last illness, he indited an ode which has the following opening lines:

"Despite thy kindness and affection, (my) heart craves
for anger from thee.
Like a glass fragile, break my heart by saying: 'Thou
canst not see me."

Chelebi Hisām ud-din says that Sheikh Sadr ud-din along with a few other mendicants paid a visit to Rūmi during his last illness During the course of their conversation he said, "May God grant you speedy recovery." "No", replied Rūmi, "There is only a

1. *Al-Furqān* 28
2. *Az-Zukhruf* 67
3 Sipah Salār p 58
4. Aflāki. p 350

hair's-breadth distance between the lover and the beloved. Won't you like that this distance should also vanish and the finite spirit may unite with the Infinite One?"

Rūmi dictated the following ode during his illness to Chelebi Hisām ud-dīn:

"Go! head on pillow lay; alone, in peace, me leave,
Loved tyrant, plague by night, while all around thee grieve
That peerless beauty (God) has no need kind care to show,
But, sallow lovers, ye must patient faith still know
Perplexity is ours to bear, 'tis his to own hard heart,
Shed he our blood, 'what sin?' He'll not pay murderer's smart
To die's hard, after all, but remedy there's none,
How, then, to crave a remedy? The evil's done
Last night, in dream, a warder, from my love's abode,
Made sign to me, and said 'This way! Hold thou my lode'"[1]

Rūmi died, at the age of sixty-eight years and three months, at the close of the day, on the fifth of Jamadi-ul-Ākhir 672 A.H.[2]

When his corpse was brought forth, a great multitude swarmed the place, all of whom smote their breasts and raised loud lamentations. Jews and Christians came reading their own scriptures. The Muslims strove to drive them away but they would not be repelled. It was feared, at length, that a tumult would break out. The intelligence was conveyed to Parwana,[3] who asked the Rabbis and Bishops why they mixed themselves up with the funeral of a Muslim saint. They replied that they had found in him all the signs and virtues of the prophets described in their scriptures and have learnt the ways of the sages and saints of yore, than they had ever known before. They were all ultimately allowed to

1 Redhouse, p. 95.
2 Sipah Salār, p. 59.
3 Moin ud-din Parwana, the governor of Konya.

accompany the funeral The number of people who flocked to join the funeral procession was so great that the bier taken out early in the morning could reach the burial place by sun-set, and thus with all honours, the luminous sage was laid to rest in his grave

The Character of Rūmi:

Shibli writes in the *Sawāneh* (Biography) of Maulāna-i-Rūm:

"So long as the Maulāna had not taken to the path of mysticism, he led the life of an eminent scholar and a doctor of faith Whenever he went out, riding on his mule, a large number of students, theologians and even the grandees accompanied him on foot. The kings and chiefs of State received him with highest honour But no sooner did he adopt the mystic way of life, his life was completely transformed He continued to teach and give juristic-opinions, but these vocations appeared to be only reminiscent of his past life, he always seemed to be enchanted with a rapturous love, in transports and trances of a sublimated soul"[1]

Prayers and Penance:

Rūmi was extremely fond of prayers and penance. Siph Salār, who dwelt with him for many years, relates that he never saw Rūmi in a night-gown He never had a pillow or a bedding, nor did he ever lie down for taking rest. Whenever he felt drowsy, he took a nap wherever he might be sitting He says in a verse

"Shrouded in a quilt studded with thorn,
How can he sleep, for pricked is always lovelorn."

Whenever he found that his disciples were heavy with sleep, during the musical services, he would rest his head between his knees pretending to have fallen asleep, but after everyone had dropped into slumber, he would get up and occupy himself with the performance of *Zikr* (recollection) and recitation.[2] He has

1 *Sawāneh* : p 34
2 *Ibid*, p 35

alluded to it in one of his odes in which he says

"Everyone slept but not I, for the heart smite my control, outright
My eyes grew accustomed to count the stars, night after night.
Sleep has gone out of my eyes never to return,
It has taken the poison of thy separation and taken to flight"

Prayers of Rūmi:

No sooner had the time for an obligatory prayer arrived then Rūmi was a completely changed man[1] He would immediately turn towards *Ka'ba*, his face turning pale, and he would soon be lost in the prayers Sipah Salār relates that it was not unoften that Rūmi spent the whole night in two *rak'ats* of prayer[2] Rūmi has described in an ode his own condition during the prayers He says:

"After sun-set prayer, one lights the lamp or the meal he takes,
But I am left with sighs and moans for my departed mates.
With tears I perform ablution, my prayer is filled with fire;
A call to prayer thus given, sets the door of mosque ablaze
How very wonderful is the prayer of intoxicated ones;
Say: 'It is flawless', for it transcends the time and space
Perhaps I finished the second *Rak'at*, or perhaps the fourth;
I know not in fact, what I read or didn't get the time at all
How should I knock the door of Truth; my hands and heart are not mine

1. *Sawāneh*, p 35
2. Sipah Salār, p 21.

A friend like thee has robbed me of the heart: now
God alone can provide shelter.
I know not, by God, when the service ended or who
led the prayer."

Once Rūmi was performing his prayers in a wintry cold night. His tears trickled down his face on the beard, turning the tears into heads of ice owing to the intense cold, but he remained engaged in his prayers without being even aware of it.

Austerity and Contentment:

Of simple habits, austere and frugal, Rūmi led a life of almost primitive simplicity. Whatever presents were received from the king, nobles or other affluent people were passed on by him to Salah ud-dīn or Chelebi Hisām ud-dīn although he often had nothing to make both the ends meet for his own dependents. He kept a portion of such presents only on the insistence of his son, Sultan Veled, but he was very much pleased when there was absolutely no provision for subsistence in his own house. On such occasions he used to remark that his house appeared to be the abode of a mendicant.[1]

Generosity:

Rūmi was so generous that he never returned a beggar without giving him something. More than open-handed—he gave away with both hands—he never buttoned his gown or shirt so that it might be easier for him to take it off in case anybody asked for it.

Humility and Tender-heartedness:

Once Rūmi was going somewhere with his disciples He found his way blocked by a dog sleeping in a narrow lane. He stood there waiting but someone made the poor thing get up and clear the lane. Rūmi felt much aggrieved that the poor creature was disturbed in its sleep.[2]

1. *Sawānih*, p 36
2. *Ibid*, p. 39.

On another occasion he found two persons quarrelling and abusing each other He requested both of them to denounce him and bury the hatchet instead of calling names to each other. Both of them fell on his feet and patched up their differences [1]

Lawful Earnings:

Rūmi received a stipend of 15 *Dinars* a month out of the proceeds of charitable trusts Since he did not like to accept a remuneration without doing some work in lieu thereof, he had taken upon himself to give juristic-opinion on religious and legal matters referred to him by the people He was so particular about it that he had instructed his disciples to let him know of the questions referred to him as soon as these were received

Once someone remarked that Sheikh Sadr ud-din had a stipend of thousand *Dinars* fixed for him while he got only fifteen *Dinars.* Rūmi at once corrected him by saying that the Sheikh needed even more money and it would have been better if the fifteen *Dinars* fixed for him were also given to the Sheikh [2]

Dislike of Worldliness:

Rūmi hated the rounds of visits frequently paid to him by the king, princes and the nobles. He never liked them to call upon him and sometimes even expressed his distaste to the face of visiting personage. Once a certain grandee who paid a courtesy call to Rūmi, said "Excuse me, Sir, I couldn't pay my respects more frequently owing to other pre-occupations" "You need not be sorry for it", came the reply from Rūmi, "I am more grateful to those who do not call upon me."[3]

The Mathnawi and its Message:

Rūmi had been endowed with a tremendous spiritual enthusiasm and a fervour of love which was lying dormant under the

1. *Sawāneh*, p 39
2 *Ibid*, p 42
3. *Ibid*, p 43

cover of his erudition, particularly of those relating to the speculative branches of secular sciences As soon as Shamsh Tebrez cast his enchanted spell over Rūmi, it would be seen, his spirituality was animated and the outcome was enchanting and beautiful lyrics describing the mysteries of divine love and spiritual raptures, undescribable ecstasies and transports He ultimately attained the stage where, in the words of Iqbāl, he could claim:

"At last flames burst forth from every hair of me,
Fire dropped from the veins of my thought."[1]

It is a state where every sage gives a call with a thousand tongues for a worthy companion:

"Oh, where in the wide world is my comrade?
I am the Bush of Sinai Where is my Moses?"[2]

And this was the reason why Rūmi found it difficult to spend his days without a confidant and companion· his restlessness did not calm down until he found a companion in Salah ud-din after Shamsh and in Chelebi Hisām ud-dīn after Salah ud-dīn—verily, it is not easy for the candle to throb alone.[3]

It was this fire of love which led Rūmi ,to seek spiritual food and energy through musical recitations. He has explained it thus in the Mathnawi·

"Therefore *samā'* (music) is the food of lovers (of God), since therein is the phantasy of composure (tranquillity of mind)

From (hearing) sounds and pipings the mental phantasies gather a (great) strength; nay, they become forms (in the imagination).

The fire of love is made keen (inflamed) by melodies, just as the fire (ardour) of the man who dropped walnuts (into the water)."[4]

1. *Asrar-i-Khudi*, p 88 (Translation by Nicholson, p. 145).
2. *Ibid*, p. 88 (Nicholson, p 144)
3 *Ibid*, p. 88 (Nicholson, p 145).
4 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 313 (Book IV-Verses 742-44).

veracity of revealed truths. Rūmi raised a severe criticism of this view and frowned upon its standard-bearers in these words:

"The doctrine held by the eye of sense is Mu'tazilism, whereas the eye of Reason is Sunnite '(orthodox) in respect of (its) union (vision of God).[1]

Those in thrall to sense-perception are Mu'tazihtes, (though) from misguidedness they represent themselves as Sunnites.

Any one who remains in (bondage to) sense-perception is a Mu'tazilite; though he may say he is a Sunnite, 'tis from ignorance.

Any one who has escaped from (the bondage of) sense-perception is a Sunnite· the man endowed with (spiritual) vision is the eye of sweet-paced (harmonious) Reason "[2]

Rūmi has asserted at more than one place in the Mathnawi that in addition to the external senses, man has been endowed with certain inner senses too, and that these inner senses are much more wider, potent and sagacious than the outer sense-organs.

"Besides these five (physical) senses there are five (spiritual) senses· those (latter) are like red gold, while these (physical) senses are like copper.

In the bazaar where they (the buyers) are expert, how should they buy the copper sense like (as though it were) the sense of gold?

The bodily sense is eating the food of darkness, the spiritual sense is feeding from a Sun "[3]

If anything cannot be seen or, for that matter, is beyond the awarness of a physical experience, then in Rūmi's view, it is not

1 What Rūmi means is that those who are blind to spiritual things virtually occupy the position of the Mu'tazilites who denied that it is possible for the Faithful to see God either in this world or the next. From the Sufi standpoint, on the other hand, the real test of faith is the capacity for spiritual vision

2 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 225 (Book II-61-64)-

3. *Ibid* , Vol II. p 224 (Book II-49-51)

necessarily non-existent. He holds the view that the latent underlies the manifest in the same way as healing properties form the intrinsic quality of a medicine.

"The unbeliever's argument is just this, that he says,
'I see no place of abode except this external (world).'
He never reflects that, wherever there is anything external, that (object) gives information of hidden wise purposes.
The usefulness of every external object is, indeed, internal: it is latent, like the beneficial quality in medicines "[1]

Rūmi says that the materialists lose their sense of inner cognition and are unable to understand its objectives simply because they cultivate the habit of accepting only the external and manifest In his opinion this signifies lack of foresight on the part of the materialists

"Since the foolish took (only) the external appearances (into consideration), and (since) the subtleties (inward aspects) were very much hidden from them
Necessarily they were debarred from (attaining to) the (real) object, for the subtlety escaped (them) on the occasion when it (the object) presented itself"[2]

Rūmi proceeds further to censure the intellect as well which, like sense-perception, lacks the capacity to obtain the knowledge of realities revealed by the prophets It really does not possess the ground on which it can base its speculation in such matters nor has it any experiential awareness of the realm hidden from its view

"What do you know of the waters of Euphrates and Oxus, sweet and pure,
You have taken abode in a pond, salty, rotted and impure "[3]

An intellect which has a dominant carnal reason is a partial or particular intelligence, according to Rūmi, for it breeds doubts and scepticism and its abode is darkness, it brings disgrace to the

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, pp 430-431 (Book IV-2878-80)
2 *Ibid*, Vol VI, p 81 (Book V-1331-32)
3 *Ibid*, *Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nawi*, p 96

absolute intelligence and frustration to mankind. Insanity is preferable, indeed, to the sagacity of such an intellect.

> "Imagination and opinion are the bane of the particular (discursive) reason, because its dwelling-place is in the darkness.[1]
>
> The particular intelligence has given the (universal) intelligence a bad name: worldly desire has deprived the (worldly) man of his desire (in the world hereafter) [2]
>
> It behoves us to become ignorant of this (worldly) wisdom, (rather) must we clutch at madness "[3]

Rūmi says that he has had an experience of this worldly wisdom and had reached the conclusion that:

> "I have tried far-thinking (provident) intellect; henceforth I will make myself mad "[4]

Thereafter Rūmi advances an argument, clear-cut as well as to the point, in support of his contention He says that if intellect were sufficient for the comprehension of the revealed truths, then the rationalists, logicians and dialecticians would have also shared the secrets of religion

> "If the intellect could discern the (true) way in this question, Fakhr-i-Rāzi[5] would be an adept in religious mysteries "[6]

Rūmi holds the view that the sciences cultivated by human intellect cloud the knowledge of reality and make the seeker of Truth sceptical. Therefore, he pleads that one should shun philosophy and ratiocination, if he wants to inculcate an unflinching faith and attain the gnosis of the ultimate Reality.

> "If thou desire that misery should vanish (from thee),

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 87 (Book III-1558).
2 *Ibid*, Vol VI, p 30 (Book V-463)
3 *Ibid*, Vol II, p 341 (Book II-2328).
4 *Ibid*, Vol. II, p 341 (Book II-2332).
5. Alluding to Fakhr ud-din Rāzi (d 1209 A D), the famous scholastic theologian, philosopher and author of a commentary on the Qur'ān entitled *Mafatih al-ghayb*
6 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p, 248 (Book V-4144)

endeavour that wisdom may vanish from thee—

The wisdom which is born of (human) nature and phantasy. the wisdom which lacks the overflowing grace of the Light of the Glorious (God).

The wisdom of this world brings increase of supposition and doubt; the wisdom of the Religion soars above the sky."[1]

In his view the logical syllogisms and the inferences drawn therefrom smack of an artificial method of reasoning which is only of limited utility. This method is unsuited for establishing the veracity of theological truths. Drawing an analogy between the logical argumentation and the wooden legs, he says:

"The leg of the syllogisers is of wood: a wooden leg is very infirm."[2]

The science of dialectics and the scholastic argumentation employed by it are incapable of producing conviction and an ardent faith. The reason for it is, according to Rūmi, that the dialectician is himself sceptical about the veracity of what he pleads; he merely rehearses the premises and propositions he has learnt from his teachers and the propounders of his school of thought.

'The imitator brings on to his tongue a hundred proofs and explanations, but he has no soul.

When the speaker has no soul and (spiritual glory), how should his speech have leaves and fruit?"[3]

Rūmi prefers intuition or spiritual cognition to the carnal intellect which is particular, individual, discursive, and dependent on sense-perception He holds the view that experiential awareness can gain knowledge pertaining to the terrestrial world only. On the other hand, the spiritual cognition emanating from the Universal Intellect is a lodestar for the human intellect; the intellect of man should be guided by intuition in the same way as

1. *The Mathnawi*. Vol II. p. 387 (Book II, 3201-3).
2. *Ibid*. Vol. II, p 115 (Book I, 2128).
3. *Ibid*. Vol. VI, p. 149 (Book V, 2480-81).

the former holds the reins of human frame. The spiritual cognition is thus, in the view of Rūmi, the Intellect of intellect without which the carnal intellect would not deserve to be known by that name. Spiritual cognition is, however, enjoyed only by those who have been enriched by an ardent faith and an unquestioning conviction in the Ultimate Reality.

"The philosopher is in bondage to things perceived by the intellect, (but) the pure (saint) is he that rides as a prince on the Intellect of intellect."[1]

Volumes after volumes have been blackened by the discursive reason of man but it is only the Universal Intellect which illumines this universe

"The intellect makes books entirely black (with writing), the Intellect of intellect keeps the horizons (the whole universe) filled (with light) from the Moon (of Reality).

It is free from blackness and whiteness the light of its moon rises (and shines) upon heart and soul "[2]

The Intellect of intellect, born of faith and credence, guards man against carnal desires and earthly temptations. It instils a sense of faith and trust, confidence and hope while discursive reason brings disbelief and infidelity, doubt and suspicion.

"The reason that is allied to Faith is like a just police-inspector: it is the guardian and magistrate of the city of the heart [3]

Intellect is the guardian of Faith within the human frame; its fear keeps the baser-self in chains "[4]

Rūmi propounds the view that Spirit rules over intellect precisely in the same way as the senses are servitors of reason The Spirit can lay bare the mysteries of heaven and earth which are beyond the ken of intellect and resolve the most knotty problems

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 141 (Book III, 2527)
2 *Ibid*, Vol IV, p 142 (Book III, 2531 32)
3 *Ibid*, Vol IV, p 382 (Book IV, 1985).
4 *Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nawi*, p 347

to which reason cannot find a clue

"Sense-perception is a captive to the intellect, O reader,
know also that the intellect is captive to the spirit
The spirit sets free the chained hand of the intellect
and brings its embarrassed affairs into harmony."[1]

The philosopher cannot overstep the limits set by the information furnished by human perception and the rules of logical syllogism The carnal intellect is thus cast into a prison from which it cannot come out

"The philosopher simply speaks according to the science of reasoning, for his intellect cannot cross the threshold (of its abode).[2]

The philosopher killed (exhausted) himself with thinking. let him run on (in vain), for his back is turned towards the treasure

Let him run on the more he runs, the more remote does he become from the object of his heart's desire "[3]

The philosopher may possess a complete mastry over speculative branches of learning and may also be endowed with foresight but he lacks insight into his own self, although the cognition of the latter is more important than the knowledge of everything else.

"This tyrant excels in thousands of sciences
But lo ! of his soul he knowest nothing.
Thou knowest the value of every commodity,
But not of thy own, Is'nt it a folly ?"

Rūmi advises the philosophers and dialecticians to abandon philosophy and scholasticism and cultivate the knowledge of religious truth, for it alone has the light of certainty and wisdom

"How long wilt thou be mad after the Grecian lore,
Try to learn the wisdom of faith, once more "[5]

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 102 (Book III, 1824-25)
2 *Mathnawi Molvi Mᶜnawi*, p 82
3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p 389 (Book VI, 2356-57)
4 *Mathnawi Molvi Mᶜanwi*, p 449
5 *Ibid* , p 86

Rūmi says that man can attain the knowledge of Self through purification of his heart and rectitude of his behaviour. The more the heart is purified, the more it would be able to reflect, like a mirror, the wisdom contained in the faith and illuminate itself, without the help of a tutor or scripture, with the divine grace and revelatory guidance

"Make thyself pure from the attributes of self, that thou mayest behold thine own pure untarnished essence,

And behold within thy heart (all) the sciences of the prophets, without book and without preceptor and master."[1]

At another place Rūmi says :

"When the mirror of your heart becomes clear and pure, you will behold images (which are) outside of (the world of) water and earth.[2]

If the orifice of heart is open and clean ; Divine light without an agent shall it glean."[3]

Love of God :

The impetus received by the movement of rationalism and scholasticism in the seventh century of the Muslim era had cooled the yearnings of the human soul for the apprehension of the Divine. From one end of the Islamic world to another, leaving a few illuminated souls here and there, nobody seemed to have any taste for Divine manifestation and illumination of the heart. It was, as if, an apathy or coolness had overtaken the hearts of the people It was a situation expressed by Iqbāl in this verse :

"The fire of love has cooled down ; what a calamity it is !
The Musalman is naught but a heap of ashes "[4]

It was at this critical stage that Rūmi sounded the note of alarm and exhorted the people to betake the path of love. His call fired the frenzy of love once again in the entire world of Islam

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 188 (Book I, 3460-61)
2 *Ibid* , p 225 (Book II, 72)
3 *The Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nawi.*
4 *Bal i-Jibreel*, p 168

Rūmi explained what he meant by love and to what sublime eminence it could raise the people. He says:

"By love bitter things become sweet, by love pieces of copper turn into gold;
By love dregs become clear, by love pains become healing,[1]
By love the prisons becomes a garden; sans love the garden becomes desolate,
By love stone turns into liquid; devoid of it, wax gets hard as a metal;
By love illness contributes health, and, the scourge becomes a blessing,
By love the dead is made living, by love the king is made a slave"[2]

Rūmi describes the vigour of love and its virtues in these words:

"Through Love the earthly body soared to the skies
the mountain began to dance and became nimble
Love inspired Mount Sinai, O lover, (so that) Sinai (was made) drunken and *Moses fell in a swoon*"[3]

Love is so dignified and high-souled that it cares nothing for empires. One who has once drunk at the spring of love looks with disdain on all worldly possessions. Iqbāl has expressed the same idea in the couplet in which he says:

"Listless it turns the heart from the heaven and earth
How should I describe, what the flavour of love is like"[4]

The lover hardly cares for anything, he is mad after the Supreme Beauty. Rūmi says

"Love turns heedless of the worlds, this or that A

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 300 (Book II, 1529-30)
2 *The Mathnawi Molvi Maʿnawi*, p 134 (Book II)
3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 6 (Book I, 25-26) The words in italics give a mystical turn to the passage of Qurʾān (VII 143) which describes the epiphany of God on Mt Sinai and Moses becoming senseless
4 *Bal-i-Jibreel*, p 142

thousand madness it imbibes (in the lover's heart)."[1]

The lover becomes a King of kings and an object of true-love. He tramples underfoot the crowns and sceptres of authority.

"Overt and latent to the extreme his wonders are;
For those who rule the heart aspire for him. He treads a path different from others, Even the throne of King is under his foot "[2]

Speaking of the love, arrogant and stately, Rūmi himself becomes enchanted by a tremendous spiritual enthusiasm. Says he :

"Worldly dominion is lawful (only) to those who indulge the body : We (lovers) are devoted to the everlasting kingdom of Love."[3]

Love is the only malady welcomed by its sufferer, who never desires to recover from it. The lover really desires a continuous increase in his affliction

"All the sick hope to be cured, but this sick one sobs, crying, 'Increase my sickness!'

I have found no drink sweeter than this poison: no state of health can be sweeter than this disease."[4]

After the illness of love, no other sickness can overtake the lover

"The words (spoken by him) deliver (thee) from words (of idle disputation), and the sickness (of love inspired by him) lets thee escape from the sickness (of sensuality)."[5]

If love is a sickness, it is worth a thousand health. It pains and pinches, but still it is sweeter than thousands of pleasures

"Therefore the sickness of love is the (very) soul of health; its pains are the envy of every pleasure."[6]

1 *Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nawi*, p 247.
2. *Ibid*, p 247
3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol. VI, p 502 (Book VI, 4421)
4 *Ibid.*, p 512 (Book VI, 4598-99).
5. *Ibid.*, p 512 (Book VI, 4593).
6 *Ibid.*, p 512 (Book VI, 4594)

Rūmi says that love is essentially a spiritual passion Even if it be regarded a sin, virtue can rightly be sacrificed at its altar. In so far as it serves to purify the soul, it helps to ascend to Divine favour in a moment that years of penance and prayer may be unable to attain

"No act of piety can be better than this sin years in comparison with this moment are (but) an hour "[1]

The blood of the martyi of love is purer than water, for the martyr does not need purifying bath and ablution

"For martyrs, blood is better than water: this fault (committed by him) is better than a hundred right actions (of another) "[2]

The distraught lover of God is not liable to follow the laws and ordinances promulgated for the ordinary folk How can tithe be levied on a village already devastated ?

"To lovers there is a burning (which consumes them) at every moment tax and tithe are not (imposed) on a ruined village "[3]

Love is the heritage of Adam, while Satan has bequeathed artfulness and cunningness

"He that is blessed and familiar (with spiritual mysteries) knows that intelligence is of Iblis, while love is of Adam."[4]

The cunning and artful depends on his wits and craftiness, while the lover seeks asylum from his friend and entrusts himself to his care Cunningness and artfulness are like swimming in a deluge while love is like the Noah's ark And has anybody seen the crafty and the cunning coming out safely from the great deluge and the Noah's ark submerging in it ?

"Intelligence is (like) swimming in the seas· he (the

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p 512 (Book VI, 4600)
2 *Ibid* , Vol II, p 312 (Book II, 1767)
3. *Ibid* , Vol II, p. 312 (Book II, 1765)
4 *Ibid* , Vol IV, p 349 (Book IV, 1402).

swimmer) is not saved· he is drowned at the end of the business."[1]

Love is as a ship for the elect· seldom is calamity (the result) , for the most part it is deliverance "[2]

The sagacity of intellect can be exchanged for the bewilderment of love, as the former is a product of doubt and uncertainty while the latter is born of gnosis and illumination

"Sell intelligence and buy bewilderment intelligence is opinion, while bewilderment is (immediate) vision "[3]

Rūmi's summon to betake the path of love is marked by his advice to become a lover if one cannot become a beloved He says that it is not possible for everyone to become loveworthy but he can nevertheless become an adorer.

"Thou who are not a Joseph, be a Jacob be (familiar), like him, with weeping and sore distress [4]

If thou art not Shirin or Layla, be thou a true-love like Farhād or Majnun "[5]

He goes a step further and says that love being the greatest bounty, it is more profitable to be a lover than becoming a beloved. If the loved ones only knew the sublimity evoked by the devoted attachment, they would themselves choose to be adorers rather than remain an object of adoration .

"Abandon the state of being loved (by men) and adopt the practice of loving (God), O you who think that you are excellent and pre-eminent "[6]

But love is too precious to be wasted on any transitory or finite being which is likely to become extinct Love is a living spiritual passion and so the object of love should also be living and everlasting

"Love for the dead is not lasting· Keep your love

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 349 (Book IV, 1403)
2 *Ibid* , Vol IV, p 350 (Book IV, 1406)
3 *Ibid* , Vol IV, p 350 (Book IV, 1407)
4 *Ibid* , Vol II, p 103 (Book II, 1904)
5 *Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nawi*, p 49
6 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p 192 (Book V, 3189)

(fixed) on the Living One who increases spiritual life."[1]

Rūmi says that only the overwhelming grace of the Divine Beloved can truly inspire and refresh the heart of man

"(But) love of the living is every moment fresher than a bud in the spirit and in the sight.

Choose the love of that Living One who is everlasting, who gives thee to drink of the wine that increases life

Choose the love of Him from whose love all the prophets gained power and glory."[2]

Nobody need have any apprehension of being denied access to that Glorious True-love for He is ever willing to respond to the call of the lover.

"Do not say, 'We have no admission to that King' Dealings with the generous are not difficult "[3]

The love may appear to be a sickness for it produces a crushing grief in the lover's heart Its pain may be unbearable but if the lover is able to endure it, he is rewarded with an everlasting illumination and the gnosis of God.

"Being in love is made manifest by soreness of heart there is no sickness like heart-sickness "

The lover's ailment is separate from all other ailments love is the astrolabe[4] of the mysteries of God.[5]

The sickness of love is in fact a cure for every other illness, be it moral or spiritual Where the spiritual healers fail and yield to despair, the love succeeds and cures all the moral and spiritual diseases in no time. A man so restored to moral and spiritual health by the grace of love exclaims thus under the spell of its enchantment

"Hail, O Love that bringest us good gain—thou that art the physician of all our ills,

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI p 197 (Book V, 3272)
2 *Ibid* , Vol II, p. 15 (Book I, 218-20)
3 *Ibid* , Vol. II, p 15 (Book I, 221)
4. Astrolabe is an instrument for measuring the altitude of the stars and solving the problems of spherical astronomy
5. *The Mathnawi*, Vol II , p 10 (Book I, 109-10)

The remedy of our pride and vainglory, our Plato and our Galen!"[1]

Love kindles a flame that reduces every thing save the beloved to a heap of ashes. It is extremely jealous and arrogant to let anything survive besides itself.

"Love is that flame which, when it blazes up, consumes everything else but the Beloved.

He (the lover) drives home the sword of *Not* in order to kill all other than God: thereupon consider what remains after *Not*.[2]

There remains *except* God: all the rest is gone. Hail, O mighty Love, destroyer of polytheism!"[3]

The love of God is an ocean, boundless and wide-spread; it pervades the cosmos and is without any beginning or end. It is a story of the rapturous flame kindled in the heart of man, which can never be described adequately and therefore it is better to acknowledge one's incompetence to narrate it and hold his tongue.

"If I should continue to describe Love, a hundred Resurrections would pass, and it (my description would still be) incomplete,

For there is a limit to the date of the Resurrection, but what limit can there be where the Divine attributes are (concerned)."[4]

The World of the Heart[5]

The message of love diffused so vigorously by Rūmi could not have taken roots without a liveliness and warmth in the heart of

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 6 (Book I, 23-24)

2 Alludes to the Qur'ānic Verse (XXVIII 88) which says "And cry not unto any other god along with Allah There is no God save Him Everything will perish save His Countenance"

3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p 38 (Book V, 588-90)

4 *Ibid*, Vol VI, pp. 131-32 (Book V, 2189-90).

5 The heart or the *Qalb*, as Rūmi calls it, is the spiritual entity which abides in the physical body of man and controls his organic and physical functions It is called *Qalb* (heart), because of its connection with the physical heart.

[Continued on page 352]

those to whom it was addressed In his time too, however, people were increasingly losing sight of the power and efficacy, vigour and energy possessed by the heart. Intellect was gaining ascendancy over heart · mind was being enlightened leaving the heart dull and cool The instigating self of man, comprising appetite and earthly temptations, was taking hold of him as a result of his worldly pursuits Rūmi called attention towards the fathomless vitality of the spiritual entity residing in the human heart, he narrated its wonders and miracles He reminded that every man has a world of his own which can accommodate the most far-flung empires of this earth without any danger of its being devastated by the enemy

"Heart is the abode of peace, O friend, 'tis a country,
Whose citadel is strong, wherein reigns peace and amity."[1]

The heart is abode of security, O friends; (it has) fountains and rose-gardens within rose-gardens "[2]

Rūmi says that the gardens of our terrestrial world are short-lived, but those of the heart of man are everlasting, the former take a long time in being raised and implanted but can be laid waste in no time while the latter can instantly be brought into being without any danger of its ever withering away

"The flowers that grow from plants are (living but) a moment, the flowers that grow from Reason are (ever) fresh

The flowers that bloom from earth become faded; the flowers that bloom from the heart—oh, what a joy!"[3]

Rūmi tells us that instead of directing our efforts to the pursuits of worldly-pleasures and carnal enjoyment, we should

At the same time, its nature is rather both, intellectual and emotional as opposed to intellect which possesses only the former quality When illuminated it is capable of knowing the essence of God

1 *The Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nwi*, p 199
2 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 31 (Book III, 515)
3 *Ibid*, Vol VI, p 515 (Book VI, 4649 50)

endeavour to drink the elixir of Divine love, for only this can transmute our souls into a majestic and lofty state, enabling us to enjoy the bloom of true happiness, irrespective of our station and age.

"Eat your heart (in love of God), that you may be young always (and that) your Visage (may be rosy) with Divine illumination, like the *arghawan* [1]

To become intoxicating thyself like wine (of divine love) seek a heart, good and purer, It shall make thee smiling and cheerful like a flower "[2]

Rūmi, however, rings a note of caution that one should not be misled by the mention of 'heart' by him He does not mean the heart that abides in the body and throbs, which is a seat of carnal desires and sexual appetites, completely oblivious of the taste of love and the richnees of conviction, devoid of the frenzy of spiritual passion, and whose garden never blooms That is not a human heart—it is a slab of stone

"Is narrow and dark as the souls of Jews, (being) destitute of (spiritual) savour of the loving King.

Neither has the radiance of the Sun shown into that heart, nor is there (in it any) spaciousness or opening of the door "[1]

This heart too, undoubtedly, resembles the heart of an illuminated person, in its shape and make, but it really bears no relation to the other except that both are denoted by a common name Water is the name for both—that which is found in a swamp and that which flows in a river, but, one can quench the thirst by the latter while the former being mixed with dust and filth is quite useless The two hearts differ exactly in the same manner, one belongs to those who are saints and sages, having a purer and elevated soul, while the other throbs in the body of an uncouth

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 347 (Book II-2442) *Arghawan* alludes to the pink blossoms of the Judas-tree

2 *Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nawi*, p 154

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 384 (Book II-3130-31)

libertine, no better than a dead-weight and a piece of flesh

"You say, 'I too have a heart', (but) the heart is above the empyrean, it is not below.

Certainly in the dark earth also there is water, but 't is not proper for you to wash your hands with that water,

Because, though it is water, it is overcome by the earth

Do not, then, say of your heart, 'This too is a heart'

The heart that is higher than the heavens, is the heart of the saint or the prophet "[1]

Rūmi, then, holds out hope for the common herd as well He says that the human heart is, after all, a precious treasure which is never discarded by God He is willing to accept every heart presented to Him, for He has not an eye on the profit

"(There) that Gracious One hath purchased the piece of goods that no people would look at on account of its shabbiness

With Him no base coin is rejected. for His object in buying is not (to make a) profit "[2]

Rūmi advises that since the belly of man is a veil between him and the Supreme Being, it should be cast aside Once man rises above carnal appetites and earthly desires, the mysteries of the spiritual realm are laid bare before him

"Leave the belly and stride towards the heart (spirit), in order that the salutation may come to you from God without (any) veil "[3]

Place and Worth of Humanity

The autocratic kingdoms of the middle ages, their unjust and tyrannical ways of government along with the continued warfare between powerful despots, which always held a bleak future for the people, had, in consequence, brought about a sense of despondency and inferiority amongst the people The people had lost their

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 125 (Book III, 2245-48)
2 *Ibid*, Vol VI, p 329 (Book VI, 1266 67)
3 *Ibid* Vol VI, p 151 (Book V, 2514)

worth in their own eyes. In this atmosphere of mental torpor came the Iranian mysticism which zealously propagated the negative doctrine of *fana*, or annihilation, which meant the loss of ego and a passing away of the human consciousness in a mystical union. The inevitable result of these teachings was that the ideas of self-affirmation and self-perfection, which are at the root of courage and manliness, struggle and betterment, had come to be looked down upon as unpardonable spiritual sins The Iranian mysticism, in its zeal to propagate the cultivation of divine attributes and the absorption of individual self in the Universal Ego through annihilation of the Self, had depicted such an enlarged portrait of the baser elements in the human self that one felt ashamed of the manhood. It had come to regard the negation of manhood as the ultimate end. This spirit of non-worldliness and renunciation of physical activity, denigration of humanity and the negation of Self had also made inroads into the literary compositions of the time. The doctrine preaching negation of the world and life had imperceptibly brought the urge of life to a standstill within the people who were overtaken by a sense of dejection and helplessness, and who sometimes regarded themselves as baser than even the beasts and vegetable growths Man had thus become completely oblivious of his exalted position in this universe and the boundless possibilities of his spiritual and material progress through the unfolding of individual potentialities In order to remove this misunderstanding and rectify this defect, Rūmi forcefully expounded the theory of the exalted position enjoyed by man, in his own inimitable style, which lit the flame of self-affirmation, hope and confidence in the hearts of men The melodius epics elevating the position of man, sung by Rūmi, have had a far-reaching effect on the subsequent Islamic poetry and opened a new vista of thought for the mystics and poets after him.

Rūmi invites man's attention to his unique creation as a human being. This is a Divine boon, he asserts, and a special favour from God , His robe of honour, prepared and reserved for Adam's progeny alone. This 'human creation' has been repeatedly referred to by God in the Qur'ān in the eulogistic expression of

Ahsan-i-Taqwim, that is, *of the best stature* [1]

"Read in (the Sura entitled) *Wa'l-Tin* (the words), (*We created Man*) *in the best proportion*, for the spirit, O friend, is a precious pearl

(That spirit created) *in the best proportion* surpasses the empyrean · (that spirit created) *in the best proportion* is beyond (the range of) thought "[2]

Rūmi asks· Who else except man was crowned with the epithets, "*We have honoured the children of Adam*"[3] and "*We have given thee Abundance*"[4] by the Lord of the Worlds?

"Did this heaven ever hear (the words) *We have honoured* which this sorrowful Man heard (from God) ?[5]

The tiara of *We have honoured* (*the sons of Adam*) is on the crown of thy head , the collar of *We have given thee* hangs on thy breast."[6]

Rūmi tells us that man is the centre and essence of this universe, he unites the inward and outward aspects of all creations, he is the source of all goodness and beauty in the world , he is the best of creations, in short, he comprises a universe in his own self

"(He is) a sun hidden in a mote suddenly that mote opens its mouth (and reveals the sun)

The heavens and the earth crumble to atoms before that Sun when he springs forth from ambush [7]

Thou art the sea of knowledge hidden in a dewdrop, thou art the universe hidden in a body three ells long."[8]

Man, Rūmi says further, is the ultimate end of creation and it is for him alone that the universe was created by God The entire

1 *At-Tin*, 4
2 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI , p 314 (Book VI, 1005-6)
3 *Bani Israel*, 70
4 *Al-Kauthar*, 1
5 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p. 265 (Book VI, 139)
6 *Ibid* , Vol VI, p 214 (Book V, 3574)
7 *Ibid* , Vol VI, p 511 (Book VI, 4580 81)
8 *Ibid* , Vol VI , p 214 (Book V, 3579)

creation, therefore, is bound to serve him

"Every wine is the slave of this (comely) figure and (fair) cheek (of thine) all the drunken feel envy of thee

Thou hast no need of rosy wine: take leave of (its) rosiness, thou (thyself) art (its) rosiness

Man is the substance, and the celestial sphere is his accident; all things are (like) a branch or the step of a ladder . he is the object.

Thou seekest knowledge from books—oh, ridiculous ! Thou seekest pleasure from *halwa* (sweetmeats)—oh, ridiculous !

Service to thee is imposed on all existence as a duty· how should a substance beg for help from an accident ?"[1]

And this is not all, man displays the Divine attributes and is a medium through whom God reflects His signs and lustre of beneficence

"Adam is the astrolabe of the attributes of (Divine) Sublimity the nature of Adam is the theatre for His revelations

Whatever appears in him (Adam) is the reflection of Him, just as the moon is reflected in the water of the river [2]

Know that (the world of) created beings is like pure and limpid water in which the attributes of the Almighty are shining

Their knowledge and their justice and their clemency are like a star of heaven (reflected) in running water "[3]

Rūmi, however, still not satisfied that he has been able to narrate sufficiently the excellence of the son of Adam, adds that it is, in reality, something which cannot be described fully.

"If I declare the value of this inaccessible (pearl), I shall be consumed, and the hearer too will be consumed "[4]

And who can really assess the worth of man, a creation so

1 *The Mathnawi* Vol VI p 214 (Book V, 3567-68, 3575, 3577-78)
2 *Ibid* , Vol IV, p 431 (Book IV, 3138-39)
3 *Ibid* , Vol IV, p 433 (Book IV, 3172-73)
4 *Ibid* , Vol IV, p 314 (Book IV, 1007)

sublime and grand, but the pity is that man himself does not know how precious he is He is ever willing to sell himself at a trifling price

"O thou to whom reason and foresight and intelligence are slaves, how art thou selling thyself so cheaply?"[1]

Rūmi then says that Allah is Himself the purchaser of man, for only He knows the worth of His supreme creation :

"He is our Purchaser—*God hath purchased*[2] hark, rise above anxiety for any (other) purchaser.

Seek the Purchaser who is seeking thee, One who knows thy beginning and end."[3]

But Rūmi adds that the qualities of head and heart which make man a human being are born in those who cultivate them and not in those who remain beasts in the garb of men, nor yet in those who have been led astray by their carnal desires and the temptations of their baser-self Those who lack these qualities are not men but lifeless caricatures of human beings·

"These (others) are not men, they are (mere) forms. they are dead with (desire for) bread and killed by appetite."[4]

It was, however, difficult to find in the days of Rūmi, as in every other age, those who could be called human beings in the true sense of the word. An overwhelming majority of the people who passed under the name of human beings were no better than beasts and reptiles in their conduct and behaviour, and Rūmi had grown weary of them. Being himself in search of man, he has given expression to his quest in this parable :

"Yesterday, with a lamp, the *Sheikh* went round the city
'Tired of these beasts, a man I want,' (said he),
'These easy-going mates, they have sickened me'
'A lion of God ; or Rustam, the son of Zal, That's now my fancy.'

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p 214 (Book V, 3576)
2 *At-Taubah*, p 111
3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p 89 (Book V, 1463-64)
4 *Ibid*, Vol VI, p 174 (Book V, 2886)

'He is not to be found, I have sought him long' said I,
'A thing not to be found? That's what I desire, said he.' "[1]

Self-Assertion :

Rūmi did not believe, like some other mystics, in self-negation, indifference, lethargy and renunciation of physical activity On the contrary, he affirmed the importance of social progress, active life, self-assertion and self-preservation He considered that the theories of monasticism and renunciation of the world were opposed to the teachings of Islam and the example set by the Prophet. "Had social life not been the object of God," asserted Rūmi, "He would not have prescribed congregational prayers five times a day and on Fridays, and the duty of enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong "

"The bird said to him, 'O Khwāja, don't stay in (monastic) seclusion monasticism is not good in regard to the religion of Ahmad (Mohammed)

The Prophet has forbidden monasticism. how have you embraced a heresy, O trifler?

The conditions (imposed by Islam) are: (to take part in) the Friday worship and the public prayers, to enjoin good and shun evil,

Live amongst the community that is the object of (Divine) mercy. do not forsake the religion of Ahmad (Mohammed), be ruled by his practice "[2]

In the days of Rūmi, *tawakkul* i e. confidence or sincere trust in God was held to mean a complete resignation to the preordained will of God Any effort. direct or indirect, to obtain the means of subsistence. or admit the thought of providing for the morrow was looked down upon and deemed as incompatible with *tawakkul*. Rūmi explained the correct meaning of *tawakkul* as taught by the

1 *Divan-i-Shamsh-i-Tebrez*, p 50
2 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI. p 284 (Book VI, 478-80 and 483)

Shar'ah and urged the people to make effort for earning their livelihood with trust in the beneficence of God Expounding the meaning of the Tradition: *Tether thy camel and have trust in God*, Rūmi says.

> "The Prophet said with a loud voice, 'While trusting in God bind the knee of thy camel'.
>
> Harken to the signification of 'The earner (worker) is beloved of God'. through trusting in God do not become neglectful as to the (ways and) means."[1]
>
> Harken, O Sire, to combine thy effort with trust in God; to earn thy living, strive and work hard.
>
> Strive hard to fulfil the duty charged unto thee, if thy effort slackens, what a fool thou would be!"[2]

In an allegory told by him Rūmi has repeated in the form of a debate between the lion and the beasts all those arguments which are normally set forth by the easy-going and half-hearted persons in support of their view of quietism Thereafter, Rūmi advances his own views in the form of the reply given by the lion

Rūmi explains that the limbs, capacities and capabilities given to the living beings are enough to indicate that the Divine Providence requires their active exertion and application in the form of effort If anybody hands over a spade to his servant, it implies that the master wants him to dig the earth In the same way God has endowed us with the limbs and a capacity to work which is a clear indication of His intention that we should strive and set to work all our capabilities and free-will to earn our subsistence Quietism and suspension of effort are against the intention of Divine Providence and, in reality, they amount to the spurning of the Divine gifts bestowed to the human beings Therefore, *tawakkul* really means that one should make all possible efforts and have trust in God only in so far as the result is concerned, for, notwithstanding the efforts made, the success or failure still remains entirely in the hands of God

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 51 (Book I, 913-14)
2 *Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nawi*, p 26

" 'Yes,' said the lion, 'but *the Lord of His servants*[1] set a ladder before our feet.

Step by step must we climb towards the roof to be a necessitarian here is (to indulge in) foolish hopes

You have feet why do you make yourself out to be lame? You have hands why do you conceal the fingers (whereby you grasp)?

When the master put a spade in the slave's hand, his object was made known to him (the slave) without (a word falling from his) tongue

When you take His signs to heart, you will devote your life to fulfilling that indication (of His will)

He will give you many hints (for the understanding) of mysteries, He will remove the burden from you and give you (spiritual) authority.

Freewill is the endeavour to thank (God) for His beneficence your necessitarianism is the denial of that beneficence

Thanksgiving for the power (of acting freely) increases your power[2], necessitarianism takes the (Divine) gift (of freewill) out of your hand

Beware! do not sleep, O inconsiderate necessitarian, save underneath that fruit-laden tree,

So that every moment the wind may shake the boughs and shower upon the sleeper (spiritual) dessert and provision for the journey.

If you are putting trust in God, put trust (in Him) as regards (your) work sow (the seed), then rely upon the Almighty' "[3]

Rūmi sets out to explain, on behalf of the lion, that the way of

1 "Lord of His servants" alludes to Qur'ānic verse (*Adh-Dhariyāt* 56) "I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me."

2 This paraphrases the verse of the Qur'ān (*Ibrāhīm*, 7) "If ye give thanks, I will give you more (of My bounty)"

3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, pp 52/53 (Book I, 929-32, 934-35, 938-39, 941-42, and 947)

the prophets and the saints consists of striving and making effort He also explains that "this worldliness" from which the *Shan'ah* wants a faithful to seek deliverance does not comprise the riches or offsprings; it lies in being attached to worldly possessions and temptations, since the Divine blessings shall be denied to those who lead a life of negligence and ingratitude.

"'Yes', said the lion; 'but at the same time consider the exertions of the prophets and the true believers.

God, exalted is He, prospered their exertion and what they suffered of oppression and heat and cold

O master, exert thyself so long as thou canst in (following) the way of the prophets and saints!

What is this world? To be forgetful of God; it is not merchandise and silver and weighing-scales and women

As regards the wealth that you carry for religion's sake, 'How good is righteous wealth (for the righteous man)!' as the Prophet recited

Exertion is a reality, and medicine and disease are realities the sceptic in his denial of exertion practised (and thereby affirmed) exertion'"[1]

Critique of the Rulers:

Rūmi reproached not only the populace or the learned who made mistakes in following or expounding the religious precepts, in his preachings and poems he often bitterly criticised those who held the reigns of government He openly taxed them with the charge that they were an inefficient lot who had turned the government into a child's play In the days of despotic rule, Rūmi's criticism could have had dangerous consequences, but he never held his tongue from expressing what he considered to be just and truthful

"When authority is in the hands of profligates, (a) Dhu'l-Nūn[2] is inevitably in prison.

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II pp 55/56 (Book I. 971-72 975 983-84 and 991)

2 A famous mystic, Thauban ibn Ibrāhīm, generally known as Dhu l-Nūn al-Misri (d 245 A H 859 A D)

When the pen (of authority) is in the hand of a traitor,
unquestionably Mansūr[1] is on a gibbet.

When this affair (dominion) belongs to the foolish, the
necessary consequence is (that) *they*[2] *kill the prophets*.[3]

Further, he criticises the rulers of his own times in these words

"When authority falls into the hands of one who has lost the (right) way, he deems it to be a high position (*jāh*), (but in reality) he has fallen into a pit (*chāh*)

The foolish have become leaders, and from fear (of them) the wise have drawn their heads into the cloak."[4]

Dialectics.

Rūmi is critical of the rationalists for their undue dependence on senses. At the same time he criticises the dialecticians too for their formalism and addiction to disputation. But, unlike other mystics, he is not content with summoning the people towards love and faith, intuition and spiritual enlightenment alone, he also tries to find out a convincing answer, in his own inimitable manner, to the difficult questions of dialectics and philosophy. In other words, Rūmi's approach to scholasticism is not simply critical but affirmative and constructive as well. In cases where the dialectical method leads nowhere, or the logical syllogism employed for it makes the matter even more intricate and insoluble, Rūmi approaches the problem directly as if it were a simple question and brings forth such parallels, from everyday happenings, or apologues, anecdotes, fables or legends, that a solution to the problem almost suggests itself and helps to convince the reader of the truth underlying it. The method employed by Rūmi is simple yet so subtle, if it can be so-called, that the reader never feels that Rūmi is leading him to a certain conclusion which he did not already

1 Mansūr Hallaj, another mystic (d 309 A H /913 A D)
2 Qur'ān, Al-i-Imrān 112
3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol III, p 293 (Book II, 1393 and 1398-99).
4 *Ibid*, Vol IV, p 352 (Book IV, 1447 and 1452)

know; on the contrary, he feels as if Rūmi has simply given expression to his own views on that particular question. The Mathnawi is thus a striking example of solving the most intricate theological and metaphysical issues, and also of instilling a deep conviction through the solutions offered by it, which cannot be had by going through a library of philosophical dissertations. No reader of the Mathnawi can doubt the sincerity of Rūmi and his attachment to the Creator or the inspiration drawn by him from higher sources in dealing with these intricate issues.

Rūmi belonged to the Ashʿarite school of dialectics and had earlier been a profound scholar and successful teacher of the Islamic scholasticism. He did not, however, remain a mere interpreter of that school but laid the foundation of a new method of dialectical reasoning which is quite distinct and more efficacious than the method of earlier propounders of his school He is nearer to the Qurʾānic arguments in approach and treatment of the theological problems, for he follows in the footsteps of the Qurʾān in its simplicity, directness and appeal to the common-sense

Existence of God:

The existence of God has always been the fundamental and the most important problem for all the religious doctors and scholastics. Religious philosophers of the old have undoubtedly argued the issue quite logically which puts their adversaries to silence but their arguments fail to impart conviction in the existence of God. The Qurʾān, on the other hand, appeals to the common-sense of man and invokes his inherent though dormant inclination, to accept the Supreme Truth. The Qurʾān calls upon the Prophet to declare:

> *Can there be doubt concerning Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth ?*[1]

The manner in which the Qurʾān directly introduces the subject and shows its astonishment on the doubt concerning Allah, catches man unawares and then he is led to think of the Creator of the universe, the Fashioner of all creations. The Qurʾān helps

1. *Ibrāhīm*, 10.

man to proceed from the effect to the cause, from the things made to the maker and from the heaven and earth to their Fashioner. One finds this method employed throughout in the Qur'ān. It calls attention to the creations of God Almighty and helps to ponder over His attributes; and, this is the easiest and shortest as well as the surest route, according to the Qur'ān, to attain the gnosis of God.

We shall show them Our portents on the horizons and within themselves until it will be manifest unto them that it is the Truth. Doth not thy Lord suffice since He is witness over all things?[1]

Rūmi employs the same method of argumentation in the Mathnawi. He draws inference from the universe to the First Cause and the Creator of the universe. He says that we see a number of incidents taking place in the world but not the doer. It is thus sufficiently clear, argues Rūmi, that there is some one who is the ultimate cause of these happenings; the act is before our eyes while the doer is hidden:

"See ye the pen writing but not the pen that writes:
The horse is seen running, but not that who rides;
The arrow is visible, but not the bow.
The life is in sight, but hidden is the Life of lives"[2]

Rūmi argues that the movement is itself an evidence of the power which is providing the driving force If there is a whiff of air, there must also be someone who has put it into motion.

"Thou sawest the wind moving: know that a Mover of the wind is here, who drives the wind along.

Therefore in the mind of every one possessing knowledge this is certain, that with everything that moves there is a mover."[3]

May be that man does not see the cause, but the effect is certainly before him. Therefore, it is evident that there must be the cause of everything, even though it may be hidden from one's eyes If a human frame has life and movement, it must have a

1 *Fussilat*, 53
2. *Mathnawi Molvi Macnaun*, p 305
3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, pp 279-80 (Book IV, 125 and 153).

soul too. One cannot see the soul, but is not the self-propelled movement of the body a proof that there is a soul in it?

"If you do not see him visibly, apprehend him by means of the manifestation of the effect.

The body is moved by the spirit: you do not see the spirit: but from the movement of the body know the spirit (to be its mover)."[1]

Rūmī asks. What else can be a greater evidence of the existence of the Ultimate Cause than its effects, and of the Creator than His creation? What else one wants in order to accept the existence of the sun than the light it casts on the world?

"Does not light of the sun, by its presence,
Serve thee a proof of its existence."[2]

The universe does not simply exist, it is functioning in accordance with certain set physical laws in an orderly fashion The celestial bodies move in their orbit according to a pre-ordained law; the wind and clouds are not free to go wherever they like. All these laws, drawn out so carefully and minutely, and the order and sequence we see in the cosmos, drive us to one conclusion only, and It is that the universe has a Creator and Ruler who is Wise, Knowing. The world can never deviate for a moment from the path chalked out for it by Him

"If thou seest not the revolutionary action of the (Divine) decree, look at the surging and whirling (that appears) in the (four) elements,

The sun and moon are two mill-oxen, going round and round and keeping watch (over the world)

The stars likewise run from house to house (in the sky) and convey every good and evil fortune

The cloud, too, is lashed with a whip of fire, (as though to say), 'Go that way, do not go this way!

Rain upon such and such a valley, do not rain in this quarter'. He reprimands it, saying, 'Give ear!'"[3]

1. *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 280 (Book IV, 154-55)
2. *Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nawi*, p 305
3. *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, pp 309-10 (Book IV, 916, 919-20 and 932-33)

Rūmi says that God has not created the universe for His own benefit; it has been created for the benefit and continuous promotion of man from one stage to another. He elucidates the ultimate purpose underlying the creation of the universe which is being sought without any success by the philosophers and dialecticians, in a beautiful aud convincing manner.

"The Prophet has declared that God said, 'My purpose in creating was to do good,

I created to the intent that they (My creatures) might draw some gain from Me, and that they might smear their hands with My honey,

Not to the end that I might draw some gain (from them), and that I might tear off a coat from one (who is) naked."[1]

Not to derive advantage did I create; it was but simply (to shower) rewards on My bondsmen."[2]

Prophethood

Instead of himself explaining the significance of prophethood, Rūmi prefers the prophets to elucidate the content and purpose of prophethood. They tell us that as Divine physicians they purify the hearts of mankind. Other physicians reach the heart by feeling the pulse but prophets need no medium to look into it. Ordinary physicians are concerned with the physical health of man while prophets cleanse his heart and rectify his morals and behaviour.

"We are the (spiritual) physicians, the disciples of God·
the Red Sea beheld us *and was cloven*[3]

Those natural physicians are different, for they look into the heart by means of a pulse

We look well into the heart without intermediary, for through clairvoyance we are in a high belvedere

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 357 (Book II, 2635-37)

2 *Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nawi*, p 159

3 Alludes to the verse of Qur'ān "Then We inspired Moses, saying. Smite the Sea with thy staff, and it parted and each part was as a mountain vast" (*Ash-Shu'arā'*, 63)

Those (others) are physicians of food and fruit, by them the animal soul is (made) strong.

We are physicians of deeds and words: the ray of the light of (Divine) Majesty is our inspirer,

(So that we know) that a deed like this will be beneficial to thee, while a deed like that will cut (thee) off from the Way;

And that words like these will lead thee on (to grace), while words like those will bring anguish to thee.

To those (others) physicians a (sample of) urine is evidence, whereas this evidence of ours is the inspiration of the Almighty

We do not desire a fee from anyone[1]: our fee comes from a Holy Place.

Hark, come hither for the incurable disease! We, one by one, are a medicine for the (spiritually) sick."[2]

In advancing arguments in support of the prophethood, Rūmi depends on such arguments as are appealing to the heart rather than bringing forth logical pleas for proving it on rational grounds He says that every act of a prophet tells us that he is an apostle of God He is a miracle from head to foot; one need have only a pure heart, untouched by hostility and pride to recognise a prophet In other words, the prophet is himself an irrefutable evidence of his prophethood. And this was the reason why Abdullah ibn Salām[3] exclaimed as soon as he saw the Prophet of Islam: "By God, this cannot be the countenance of an imposter."

"The heart of every one knowing its taste is cloven;
Like a miracle wrought by the word, when a prophet
hath spoken!"

Rūmi says that the conscience of the followers of a prophet is perfectly in tune with the call he gives. Whatever the prophet

1 *Vide* the verse of the Qur'ān "And O my people! I ask of you no wealth therefor" (*Hūd*. 29)

2 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 151 (Book III, 2700-9)

3. A distinguished companion of the Prophet of Islam who was formerly a Jew Rabbi

enjoins, his followers accept it ungrudgingly. The followers are really enchanted into an alluring rapture by the invigorating and revolutionising call of the prophet, since, the prophet has a message entirely different and new, capable of arousing a righteous zeal amongst his followers, that is unknown to any other view of life and the world.

"When a prophet utters a cry from without, the soul of the community falls to worship within,

Because never in the world will the soul's ear have heard from any one a cry of the same kind as his

That stranger[1] (the soul), by immediate perception of the strange (wondrous) voice, has heard from God's tongue (the words). *Verily*[2] *I am near*[3]

Rūmi says that no external evidence is required of the genuineness and truthfulness of a prophet because the call of the prophet strikes a hidden cord in the hearts of those who follow him. The call of a prophet constitutes both a premise and an argument in its favour, for, that is the only natural and convincing testimony required by the true nature of man When a thirsty person is offered water he never asks to prove it first nor the child calls for any evidence before taking to the breast of his mother What is really required for finding credence and acceptance of the truth is simply a sincere demand and sympathetic approach by the seeker of truth

"When you say to a thirsty man, 'Make haste! there is water in the cup take the water at once,'

Will the thirsty man say in any event?—'This is (mere) assertion go from my side, O pretender! Get thee far away!

Or (else) produce some testimony and proof that this

1 The soul separated from God is "a stranger" and also an exile

2 The Qur'ān says "And when My servants question thee concerning Me, then surely I am nigh" (*Al-Baqarah*, 186)

3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 408 (Book II, 3599-360)

is of aqueous kind and consists of the *water that runs from a spring.*[1]

Or (suppose that) a mother, cries to her suckling babe, 'Come, I am mother . hark, my child !'—

Will the babe say ?—'O mother bring the proof (of it), so that I may take comfort in thy milk ' "[2]

Rūmi does not consider that miracles are capable of inspiring faith, or to say it differently, it is not necessary that anyone witnessing a miracle should also become convinced of the truthfulness of a prophet's message And this is an incontrovertible fact too, since the biography of the Prophet of Islam hardly mentions anyone whose conversion was brought about by a miracle All the illustrious companions of the Prophet were those who had responded to his call—and that is really what the faith means to a person Rūmi says that the miracles are worked by the prophets simply to outwit their opponents and, evidently, one defeated in arguments can hardly be expected to become a faithful ally. The cause of attraction and devoted attachment lies in affinity and spiritual akinness.

"Miracles are not the cause of religious faith , 'tis the scent of homogeneity that attracts (to itself) qualities (of the same kind)

Miracles are (wrought) for the purpose of subjugating the foe the scent of homogeneity is (only) for the winning of hearts.

A foe is subjugated, but not a friend · how should a friend have his neck bound ?"[3]

The prophets are high-souled, dignified and stately, and therefore one has to be submissive and humble in order to derive benefit from them Like sovereigns, it behoves them to ordain, and, for others, to listen and act. Contention and debate with a

1 Alludes to *Al-Mulk*, 30 "Say Have ye thought If (all) your water were to disappear into the earth, who then could bring you gushing water ?"

2. *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 408 (Book II, 3593-97).

3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p 324 (Book VI, 1176-78)

prophet simply make one unfit to grasp the truth of his message :

"If there are thousands of (eager) seekers (of knowledge) and a single weary (disgusted) one, the Messenger will refrain from delivering his message

These mystery-telling Messengers of the hidden Mind require a hearer who has the nature of Israfil [1]

They have a haughtiness and pride like (that of) kings: they require service from the people of the world

Until you perform the observances due to them, how will you gain profit from their message ?"[2]

Thereafter Rūmi asks : why should not the prophets be so dignified ? They have to be lordly for they are the apostles of the Lord of the worlds

"How is every (kind of) observance acceptable to them ?—for they have come from the Sublime Palace."[3]

Life after Death :

Rūmi propounds the view that death is the gateway to eternal life and spiritual advancement. For death is not annihilation but simply dissolution of the bodily particles, essential for sustaining higher forms of spiritual life , so, it is nothing more than demolition of the ruins before undertaking a new construction.

"The spiritual way ruins the body and, after having ruined it, restores it to prosperity ·

Ruined the house for the sake of the golden treasure, and with that same treasure builds it better (than before)."[4]

In another verse he expresses the same idea : death bespeaks of a richer and fuller life in the same way as the shedding of the blossom is a sign of fruits becoming visible

"When the blossom is shed, the fruit comes to a head ·

1 The archangle who is always listening eagerly for the Divine command to sound the trumphet on the Day of Resurrection

2 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 202 (Book III, 3604-7)

3 *Ibid* , Vol IV, p 202 (Book III, 3609)

4 *Ibid* , Vol II, p 20 (Book I, 306-7)

when the body is shattered, the spirit lifts up its head."[1]

It is unthinkable that God, the Bestower and Enricher, shall take away such a precious thing as life from His bondsmen without any recompense Undoubtedly He intends to disperse the bodily particles to refashion the spirit into another vehicle homogeneous with its true nature and faculties in an everlasting world, and bestow upon it the gifts which no eye has seen and no ear has heard, nor any anxiety shall enter there into the hearts of men.

> "One who is slain by a king like this, he (the king) leads him to fortune and to the best (most honourable) estate
>
> Unless he (the king) had seen advantage to him (the gold-smith) in doing violence to him, how should that absolute Mercy have sought to do violence ?"[2]

Rūmi lays stress on the fact that death is essential for a higher and eternal life He illustrates his view thus :

> "The ignorant (child) first washes the tablet, then he writes the letters upon it
>
> At the time of washing the tablet (of the heart) one must recognise that it will be made into a book (of mysteries).
>
> When they lay the foundation of a house (to rebuild it), they dig up the first foundation.
>
> (Also), people first fetch up clay from the depths of the earth in order that at last you may draw up *flowing water* "[3]
>
> To write we seek a paper that is blank seed is dispersed in a field not already sown

It is nothingness from which existence springs forth, or, in other words, it is the want that sets in motion the munificence and mercy of the Creator Those who are generous and benevolent treat the poor with a loving-kindness

1. *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 160 (Book I, 2929)
2. *Ibid*, Vol II, p 17 (Book I, 242-3)
3. *Ibid*, Vol II, p 315 (Book II, 1827 and 1829-31) "Flowing water" alludes to the Qur'ānic verse, *Al-Mulk* 30

"Life comes out of the dead, so do the rich need poor to be bounteous"

Rūmi brings forth yet another argument in support of his contention He calls to attention the evolutionary process which required the soul to progress, stage by stage, from a lower existence to a higher one until it attained the shape of a human being. "How could have the soul of man advanced to its present dignified position", asks Rūmi, "if it had continued to exist in its earlier state?" There is hardly any reason, therefore, to fear death.

"From the day when thou camest into existence, thou wert fire or air or earth

If thou hadst remained in that condition, how should this (present) height have been reached by thee?

The Transmuter did not leave thee in thy first (state of) existence He established a better (state of) existence in the place of that (former one),

Thou hast gained these (successive) lives from (successive) deaths. why hast thou averted thy face from dying in Him?

What loss was thine (what loss didst thou suffer) from those deaths, that thou hast clung (so tenaciously) to (this earthly) life, O rat?"[1]

Death is thus, in the eyes of Rūmi, not extinction but the beginning of a new form of existence. He holds that the death, instead of being hateful, is an occasion of joy for the faithful

"I have tried it my death is (consists) in life· when I escape from this life 'tis to endure for ever"[2]

Death is quite different for those who are spiritually enlightened from what it is for others Those who are illuminated welcome death as a bounty from the Lord, for they regard it as a stepping-stone to further elevation of their spirit

"Hūd drew a line round the believers· the wind would become soft (subside) when it reached that place,

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, pp 49-50 (Book V-789-91 and 796-97)
2 *Ibid*, Vol IV, p 215 (Book III-3838)

Even so, to those who know God (*'ārifān*) the wind of Death is soft and pleasant as the breeze (that wafts the scent) of (loved) ones like Joseph."[1]

Free-will and Necessitarianism:

This has been one of the most hotly-contested issues of dialectics One school of the dialecticians denied "Free Will" and held that man was helpless before the preordained and immutable decree of the Creator The people subscribing to this view were known by the name of *Jabriah* or Necessitarians. Rūmi poses the question: If man has been made so helpless, why has he been enjoined to perform certain actions and refrain from others? Why was the *Shari'ah* promulgated for him? "Has anybody heard," asks Rūmi, "someone giving a command to the stones?"

"He (the Necessitarian) says that commanding and forbidding are naught and that there is no power of choice All this (doctrine) is erroneous.

The entire *Qur'ān* consists of commands and prohibitions and threats (of punishment): who (ever) saw commands given to a marble rock?"[2]

Rūmi says that free-will is ingrained in the nature of man who demonstrates it by his everyday actions. If a piece of timber falls on somebody from the roof, he is never angry with it nor does he seek vengeance from the flood or the wind from which he suffers a loss. This is so because he knows that these things do not possess a will of their own But the same man seeks retribution against another man—because he is aware that man is the master of his actions

"If a piece of timber break off from your house-roof and fall upon you and wound you severely,

Will you feel any anger against the timber of the roof?

Will you ever devote yourself to taking vengeance upon it,

1. *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 48 (Book I-854 and 860).
2. *Ibid*, Vol VI, pp 181-82 (Book V-3019 and 3026)

(And say), 'why did it hit me and fracture my hand? It has been my mortal foe and enemy?"

And (in the case of) a man who visits your wife, a hundred thousand angers shoot up from you.

(On the contrary), if a flood come and sweep away your house-hold goods, will your reason bear any enmity towards the flood?

And if the wind came and carried off your turban, when did your heart show any anger against the wind?

The anger within you is a clear demonstration of (the existence of) a power of choice (in Man), so that you must not excuse yourself after the fashion of Necessitarians "[1]

Rūmi goes a step further and claims that even animals are aware whether a certain being possesses free will or not He draws this conclusion from the behaviour of pets like dogs and camels who sometimes retaliate against the man hitting them but not against the stick or the stone with which they are struck

"If a camel-driver goes on striking a camel, the camel will attack the striker

The camel's anger is not (directed) against his stick: therefore the camel has got some notion of the power of choice (in Man).

Similarly a dog, if you throw a stone at him, will rush at you and become contorted (with fury).

Since the animal intelligence is conscious of the power of choice (in Man), do not thou, O human intelligence, hold this (Necessitarian doctrine) Be ashamed!

This (power of choice) is manifest, but in his desire for the meal taken before dawn[2] that (greedy) eater shuts his eyes to the light

Since all his desire is for eating bread, he sets his face

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p 183 (Book V-3041-43 and 3046-49)

2 The last permissible meal during the time between sunset and dawn in the month of Ramadhan, when the Muslims fast from dawn to sunset

towards the darkness, saying, 'It is not (yet) day.'"[1]

Causation:

Divergent views were held by different factions of the then Muslims about the cause and effect The view held by the philosophers was that the phenomenal world is governed by a sequence of cause and effect and, therefore, there is a permanent and essential correlation between the two; the effect proceeds from its cause in the same way as the cause is immanent in the effect The Mu'tazilites too generally subscribed to the same view and held that since the effect was an inevitable outcome of the cause, there was hardly any possibility of any change in it As a natural consequence, they denied miracles and viewed the effect proceeding without a cause as a 'breach of custom' which was an impossibility. The Ash'arites, on the other hand, subscribed to a view diametrically opposed to the Mu'tazilites and did not recognise any cause whatsoever for an effect to follow it All causes were, in their view, of only secondary importance in determining the production or non-production of the effects Similarly, their view was that no substance has any property whatsoever, all causes and substances were merely instruments for manifesting the effects and accidents in accordance with the will of God. The divergent views held by the different sections of the Muslim community were also proving harmful inasmuch as these were employed by the free-thinkers and libertarians to accept or reject whatever they liked or disliked according to their wishes and sweet-will

The view propounded by Rūmī in this regard is a middle path between the two extremes of the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites He recognises causation and accepts that there is a sequence of cause and effect in this phenomenal world which cannot be denied. He says that God has appointed effect to proceed from the cause just as He has made the properties immanent in the substances At the same time, miracles are possible and

1. *The Mathnawī*, Vol VI, pp. 183-184 (Book V, 3050-52 and 3054-56)

these have also been worked by men of God from time to time,

"Most happenings come to pass according to the (customary) law, (but) sometimes the (Divine) Power breaks the law

He hath established a goodly law and custom ; then He hath made the (evidentiary) miracle a breach of the custom

If honour does not reach us without a (mediating) cause, (yet) the (Divine) Power is not remote from the removal of the cause "[1]

Normally the people see the cause and erroneously consider it to be the real agent They are helpless for they cannot draw any other conclusion from what they have been made to witness in this phenomenal world

"In short, thou are entangled in the cause,
But there is an excuse, for thou knowest it not."[2]

Rūmi says that the causation is decidedly a fact but the "Cause of all causes" is still a greater reality. He is the only Real Agent, Creator of all causes and Omnipotent Lord, and, therefore, it does not behove man to recognise the phenomenal causes and forget the First Cause.

"O thou who art caught by the cause, do not fly outside (of causation) ; but (at the same time) do not suppose the removal of the Causer

The Causer brings (into existence) whatsoever He will · the Absolute Power tears up (destroys) the causes "[3]

Rūmi repeatedly stresses the fact that the causes of effects we ordinarily come to know are those which are capable of being perceived through our senses. In addition to these external causes there are some others too which are latent and hidden from our view. The causes known to us are immanent in the hidden ones in the same way as the effect proceeds from its evident cause The hidden cause is thus an instrument for using the manifest cause in

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p 94 (Book V-1544-46)
2 *Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nwi*, p 261
3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p 94 (Book V-1347-48)

accordance with the Will of God which is really the Prime Mover and the Real Cause behind every incident.

"If you strike stone on iron, it (the fire) leaps out, 'tis by God's command that it puts forth its foot.

The stone and the iron are indeed causes, but look higher, O good man !

For this (external) cause was produced by that (spiritual) cause. when did a cause ever proceed from itself without a cause ?

That (spiritual) cause makes this (external) cause operative, sometimes, again, it makes it fruitless and ineffectual."[1]

Just as we perceive the external causes, the prophets are able to see the latent causes.

"And those causes which guide the prophets on their way are higher than these (external) causes.

(Ordinary) minds are familiar with this (external) cause, but the prophets are familiar with those (spiritual) causes "[2]

The external causes are merely secondary and dependent on the latent or spiritual causes.

"Over the (secondary) causes there are other (primary) causes · do not look at the (secondary) cause, let thy gaze fall on that (primary cause)."[3]

And, again he stresses the superiority of latent causes to the external ones ·

"These causes are (linked together) like the physician and the sick these causes are like the lamp and the wick

Twist a new wick for your night-lamp (but) know that the lamp of the sun transcends these things "[4]

The prophets are sent by God at a time when the entire community has accepted the external causes as the real and ultimate

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 47 (Book I, 840,842-43 and 845)
2 *Ibid*, Vol II, p 47 (Book I-844 and 846)
3 *Ibid*, Vol IV, p, 141 (Book III-2516)
4 *Ibid*, Vol II, p 316 (Book II-1845-46)

ones, and discarded the Creator of all causes In other words, people become materialists or pagans by rejecting the Ultimate Cause or associating external causes with Him The prophets have, therefore, to strike at the root of this slavery to the external causes and call attention to the Creator of all causes and effects. This is also the reason why the prophets are allowed to work miracles, for, God wants to demonstrate through them that every incident depends entirely on His Will, whether the ordinary sequence of cause and effect is maintained or not.

"The prophets came in order to cut (the cords of secondary) causes . they flung their miracles at Saturn (in the Seventh Heaven)

Without cause (means) they clove the sea asunder , without sowing they found heaps of corn

Sand, too, was turned into flour by their work; goat's hair became silk as it was pulled (from the hide).

The whole of the *Qur'ān* consists in (is concerned with) the cutting off of (secondary) causes (its theme is) the glory of the poor (prophet or saint) and the destruction of (those like) Abū Lahab "[1]

Still, the sequence of cause and effect is the ordinary law or the way of God prescribed for the phenomenal world. It is intended to create an urge in man for making effort and striving to achieve his ends

"But, for the most part, He lets the execution (of His will) follow the course of causation, in order that a seeker may be able to pursue the object of his desire."[2]

These are some of the examples how Rūmi solved those problems of philosophy and religion and elucidated the tenets and doctrines of the Faith which had been turned into a spell of ideas and thoughts by the wordy wrangling of the Mu'tazilites and Ash'arites Rumi turned these dry as dust philosophical discourses

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 141 (Book III, 2517-20) (Abū Lahab was an uncle of the Prophet and his most bitter enemy)

2 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p 94 (Book V, 1549)

into lively and interesting issues and illustrated them by means of anecdotes, fables and parables He thus made the problems clear enough for his readers to grasp the truth underlying these intricate questions

Rank and Worth of the Mathnawi :

The Mathnawi is one of the greatest mystical poems which has left a lasting and indelible mark on the thought and literature of the Islamic world. It would be no exaggeration to claim that there is hardly any other literary composition which has so influenced the Muslim peoples, and that too, for such a long time The intellectual and literary circles have been drawing inspiration from the Mathnawi for the past six hundred years In poetic merit and originality of ideas, in sublimity of thoughts and intensity of feelings, in the raptures of love and ecstasy, the Mathnavi has proved to be an unexcelled literary composition It is an inexhaustible treasure, ever shedding its brilliance and bringing to light new ideas and thoughts, styles and dictions. The dialecticians and doctors of religion have ever since been drawing upon the Mathnawi to solve the problems of dialectics through its direct and easily understandable method of solving these issues The examples and anecdotes through which Rūmi has solved these problems can still satisfy the critical minds of the intelligent youths who do not want to be driven into a common groove. Most of all, the Mathnawi enjoys to this day the widest popularity as a manual of guidance for those who want to be infused with a fervour of Divine love, passionate devotion and spiritual enthusiasm by gaining access to the mystical subtlities of beatific visions and illuminations, and the esoteric meanings of the Path, Love, Yearning and Union

No work of the nature, as the Mathnawi is, can be free from faults or can remain beyond criticism. It has not been unoften that the misguided mystics have taken advantage of Rumi's views, or the people with a pantheistic bent of mind have employed certain quasi-erotic expressions used in the Mathnawi for the defence of existentialist monism. The Mathnawi is, after all, a

literary composition by a human being who was neither infallible nor in a position to avoid his intuitional knowledge and spiritual illumination being influenced to some extent by his own propensities and inclinations of mind and extraneous impressions Despite these human failings, the Mathnawi excels the literary and poetic works on the subject in its boldness of approach, variety of ideas and wealth of expression It is indeed a living example of the intellectual superiority and immortality of Islam, establishing beyond doubt that Islam is always capable of breathing new life into in its adherents. It is no mean achievement of Rūmi that the Mathnawi pulled out the thinkers and litterateurs of his time from the intellectual stupor into which they had fallen and revitalised them with a ferment of literary endeavour

The Mathnawi has yet another achievement to its credit—and that belongs to the recent times When materialism began to make inroads into the world of Islam for the second time during the twentieth century under the cover of western thought, science and philosophy, producing a scepticism and an inclination to disbelieve everything beyond the ken of senses, and the old Islamic scholasticism failed to cope with the situation, the Mathnawi of Maulana-i-Rum was again able to withstand the intellectual onslaught of the victorious and advancing materialistic West, which would have indeed been no less disastrous than its political domination. It again lit the flame of faith in revelation and the revealed truths, filling the hearts with the reverence for the prophets, and inculcating belief in the reality and the unlimited possibilities of the spiritual and the unseen world. It brought back to the citadel of Islam innumerable souls which had been waylaid by the materialistic view of the life and the world, so forcefully propounded by the West Quite a large number of western educated Muslims, especially in the Indian subcontinent, have acknowledged the debt they owe to the Mathnawi in rediscovering the true content of the faith. The greatest Muslim thinker and philosopher of the present era, Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbāl has repeatedly owned with gratitude that he has imbided the inspiration of faith and love, inner warmth of spirit and the

effervescent dynamism of action from the Mathnawi of his spiritual mentor, Jalal ud-din Rumi

"A man of penetrating insight, Rūmi, my mentor,
The caravan enchanted with love got in him a path-finder
He has an abode higher than the sun and moon,
Of the milky way he makes his canopy's string.
With the light of the Qur'ān his bosom radiates,
His mirror (of heart) puts the cup of Jamshed[1] to shame.
Rejoicing notes of that musician, pure of heart,
Within my bosom make a tumult start."[2]

At another place, Iqbāl says·

"A guide to the path of rapturous love, Rūmi indites,
Songs, which are a nectar for those dying of thirst."[3]

But, as Iqbāl complains, instead of taking to heart the gift of Rūmi—his lofty idealism, his intuitive certitude and the glow of rapturous love—a section has been using his verses simply for musical recitals and whirling frenzy

"They dilated upon his works but cared not to understand at all,
The content of his words eluded these fellows like a ghezāl[4]
Nothing they learnt save the chant and whirl,
And shut their eyes to the dance of soul"[5]

This was, however, not the fault of Mathnawi which can still be a lodestar to the present materialistic age which is repining for the true and ardent love

"Thy heart not burns, nor is chaste thy glance,
Why wonder, then, if thou art not bold

1 Alludes to the legendry cup of the Iranian emperor Jamshed in which future events could be seen
2 *Mathnawi*, '*Pas Che Bayed Kard*', p 5
3 *Jawed Nāma*, p 44
4 A dear i e a sweetheart with beautiful eyes
5 *Jawed Nāma*, p 245

The eyes that see by the light of the West,
Without a bead of tear, crafty and vile they are."[1]

Iqbāl is confident that the Mathnawi of Rūmi can still awaken the soul from its slumber of heedlessness Therefore, his message to the youth of today is

"Have Rūmi as thy guide and spiritual mentor,
Thy heart shall be filled, God-willing, with a mighty fervour.
Rūmi can cleave the kernel from its shell,
Since implanted firmly is his foot in the path of love "[2]

1 *Bal-i-Jibreel*, p 52
2 *Javed Nāma*, pp 244-45

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

A. H	*A D*	*Events and Personalities*
21-110	642-728	Hasan al-Basri
61 (10th Muharram)	680 (10th October)	Massacre of Husain ibn ʿAli
61-101	681-720	ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz
73	692	ʿAbdullah bin Zubair (d)
80-150	699-767	Abū Hanīfa, an-Nuʿmān
94-179	713-795	Mālik ibn Anas, Imām
99-101	717-720	Reign of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz
122	739	Rising of Zaid ibn ʿAli bin Husain against Caliph Hishām
124	741	Ibn Shahāb Zuhri (d)
144	761	Execution of Ibn al-Muqanaʿ
145 (15th of Ramadhan)	762 (7th December)	Execution of Muhammad Zun-Nafs-us-Zakiya
145 (24th of Zul-Qaʿada)	763 (14sh February)	Death of Ibrāhim ibn ʿAbdullah
150	767	Ibn Juraih Makki (d)
150-204	767-820	Ash Shafeʿi, Imām Muhammad ibn Idrīs
151	768	Ibn Ish'āq (d.)
153	770	Maʿmar Yamni (d.)
156	773	Saʿeed ibn abi-ʿArūba Madni (d)
160	776	Rabiʿe ibn Sabīh (d.)
164-241	780-855	Hanbal, Imām Ahmad ibn
182	798	Haitham ibn Bashīr (d.)
187	803	Ahmad ibn Hanbal's first meeting with Ash-Shafeʿi
194-256	810-870	Al-Bukhāri, Abū ʿAbdullah Muhammad ibn Ismaʿil
204	819	Ahmad ibn Hanbal began teaching of Tradition
204-261	819-874	Muslim, Abdul Husain
218	833	Caliph al-Mamūn's edict in regard to the creation of Qur'ān

A H.	*A D*	*Events and Personalities*
218-227	833-842	Reign of Calıph al-Muʿtasım
232-247	847-861	Reign of Calıph al-Mutawakkıl
258	871	Al-Kındı, Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb (d)
260-324	873 935	Al-Ashʿarı, Abul Hasan ʿAlı
273	886	Abū ʿAbdullah ıbn Mājah (d.)
275	888	Abū Daūd Sajıstanı (d)
286	899	Abū Saʿced al-Janābī (d)
299-567	911-1171	Fatımıde Calıphate
303	816	Abū ʿAbdur Rahman an-Nasāʾı (d)
309	921	Execution of Hallāj
311	923	Abū Bakr Khallal (d)
331	943	Tahāwı (d)
332	944	al-Maturīdı, Abū Mansūr (d)
339	950	al-Farābı, Abū Nasr Muhammad (d)
362	973	Islamıc law of inheritance changed by the Fatımides
372	983	*Tarāwīh* dısallowed by the Fatımides
393	1003	Punishment for offering *Salat-uz-Zuha*
395	1005	Water-cress and marsh-mellow prohibited by Fatımides
403	1013	Baqıllānı, Abū Bakr (d)
411	1020	Wine declared lawful by the Fatımides
418	1927	Asfaraʾınī, Abū Isʾhāq (d)
424	1033	People made to postrate before the Fatımıde Calıph
428	1037	Ibn Sīna, Abū ʿAlı Hasan (d)
448	1057	Salat ur-Raghaib comes into vague
450-505	1058-1111	Al-Ghazalı, Abū Hamıd ıbn Muhammad
470-561	1077-1166	ʿAbdul Qādır Jılānı
471	1079	al-Jurjānı, ʿAbdul Qāhır (d)
476	1083	Shırāzı, Abū Isʾhāq (d)
477	1084	Sheikh Abū ʿAlı al-Fārmadı (d)
478	1085	Imam ul-Harmayn Abul Maʿalı Abul Malık Juwaʾını (d)
484	1091	Al-Ghazalı's arrıval ın Baghdad
485	1092	Al-Ghazalı's appointment as ambassador ın the court of Turkhān Khatoon

A H	*A D*	*Events and Personalities*
487-512	1094-1118	Reign of Abul ʿAbbās, Mustazhir b' Illāh
488	1095	ʿAbdur Qādir Jīlanī's arrival in Baghdad
488	1095	Al-Ghazalı leaves Baghdad
490	1097	First Crusade
492	1099	Fall of Jerusalem
499	1106	Al-Ghazalı returned to teaching in Nishapur University
500	1107	Fakhr ul-Mulk killed
501	1108	ʿAlı ibn Yūsuf ibn Tashfin's order to destroy copies of *Ihyā' ʿUlūm-id-Dīn*
502	1109	Tabrezi, Abū Zakaria
504	1110	Al-Ghazalı returns to Tūs
508-597	1114-1201	Ibn al-Jawzı, ʿAbdur Rahmān
511	1117	Cadı Abū Saʿeed Makhramı
512-529	1118-1135	Al-Mustarshid b' Illāh, the Calıph
513	1119	Ibn ʿAqeel, Abul Wafā (d.)
516	1122	al-Harīrı, Abul Qāsim (d)
525	1131	al-Dabbās, Sheikh Abul Khair Mammad ibn Muslim (d)
529	1135	Calıph al-Mustarshid defeated by Sultan Masʿūd
529	1135	al-Rāshid b' Illāh (deposed)
530-555	1136-1160	al-Muktafi l' Amr Illāh
539 (6th Jamādı ul-Akhir)	1144 (5th December)	Capture of Edessa (Roha)
540	1145	ʿAbdul Momin succeeds Tashfin ibn ʿAlı ibn Tashfin in Spain
541 (5th Rabı ul-Thānı)	1146 (14th Septeber)	Murder of ʿImad ud-dīn Zengı
543-628	1148-1231	Baha' ud-din Veled, Muhammad
555-565	1160-1170	al-Mustanjid b'Illāh
558	1163	Defeat of Nūr ud-dīn Zengi at Hisn al-Akrād
559	1164	Capture of Hārim by Nur ud-din Zengı
569 (11th Shawwal)	1174 (15th May)	Death of Nur ud-dīn Zengı
575-622	1179-1225	Reign of an-Nāsir li Din-Illāh

A. H	*A. D*	*Events and Personalities*
578-660	1182-1262	ʿIzz ud-dīn ibn ʿAbdul-Salām
583 (24th Rabi ul-Akhir)	1187 (4th July)	Battle of Hittīn (Tiberias)
583 (27th Rajab)	1187 (2nd October)	Salah ud-dīn's entry in Jerusalem
588	1192	Peace concluded after Third Crusade
589 (27th Safar)	1193 (4th March)	Death of Salah ud-dīn Ayyubi
591	1195	Establishment of colleges in Haleb
593-632	1197-1235	Suhārwardī, Shahāb ud-dīn
595	1198	Ibn Rushd, (Averroes) Abū Wali Muhammad (d)
557-624	1162-1227	Chenghiz Khan
596-617	1199-1220	Reign of ʿAlāʾ ud-dīn Muhammad Khwarism Shah
597	1201	Famine in Egypt
597	1201	Earthquack in Syria, Iraq, etc.
601	1205	Battles between Qatādah Husami and Sālim Husami
602	1206	Chenghiz Khan elected Kakhan
603	1206-7	War between Ghorids and Khwarism Shah
604	1207	Crusaders attack Syria
604 (6th Rabi ul-Awwal)	1207 (30th September)	Birth of Jalāl ud-dīn Rūmi
606	1209	Rāzi Fakhr ud-dīn (d)
607	1210	Conspiracy between the Crusaders and the rulers of Jazirah
610	1213	Bahāʾ ud-dīn Veled leaves Balkh
616	1218	Chenghiz Khan attacks the kingdom of Khwarism Shah
616	1219	Crusaders capture Damietta
622	1225	Birth of Chelebi Husām ud-dīn
623-640	1226-1242	Reign of Mustansir b'Illāh
624	1227	Death of Khwarism Shah
626	1229	Battles between Ayyubid Princes
626-639	1229-1241	Reign of Ogotav
628	1231	Death of Bahaʾ ud-dīn Veled
630	1233	Rūmi's journey to Damascus
635	1238	Rūmi returns to Konya
637	1239	Burhān ud-dīn (d)
638	1240	Ibn ʿArabi, Mohi ud-dīn (d)

A H	*A D*	*Events and Personalities*
639	1241	Conversion of Khan Ananda
640-643	1242-1245	No covering sent for K'aba by the Caliph
640-644	1242-1246	Royal processions on the occasion of 'Id
640-656	1242-1258	Reign of al-Mu'tasim b'Illāh
642	1244	Ibn 'Alqami appointed as the Prime Minister of Abbasid Caliphate
642 (26th Jamādi ul-Ākhir)	1244 (29th November)	Shams ud-dīn Tebrez arrives in Konya
643 (1st Shawwal)	1246 (20th February)	Shams ud-dīn Tebrez leaves Konya
644-646	1246-1248	Reign of Kuyuk
645	1247	Jalāl ud-dīn Rūmi turns to musical recitations
647	1249	Sheikh Salah ud-dīn the gold-beater appointed as Chief assistant by Rūmi
654-665	1256-1267	Reign of Barāka Khan
655	1257	Shi'a-Sunni Riots in Baghdad
656	1258	Halaku sacks Baghdad
657	1259	Sheikh Salāh ud-dīn (d)
658	1260	Fall of Damascus
658 (25th of Ramadhan)	1260 (3rd September)	Battle of 'Ain Jalūt
659	1261	Revival of 'Abbasid Caliphate
664-669	1266-1270	Reign of Burāq Khan (Ghyas ud-dīn)
672 (5th Jamādi-ul-Ākhir)	1273 (17th December)	Death of Jalāl ud-dīn Rūmi
683	1284	Rising against Takudar Khan
683-690	1284-1291	Reign of Arghun
694	1295	Conversion of Ghazān, the seventh Ilkhān
703	1304	Uljaytu (Muhammad Khudabandah) succeeds Ghazān
722-730	1322-1330	Reign of Tarmashirīn Khan
723-728	1323-1328	Reign of Timūr Khan
726	1326	Conversion of Tarmashirīn Khan
748-764	1347-63	Reign of Tuqlūq Timūr Khan
806	1403	Hafiz Zain ud-dīn al-'Iraqi (d)

Ahl-i-Bait.—*Lit* the people of the house of the Prophet, with reference to Qur'ān XXXIII-33 The Shi'aites, however, attribute the expression to 'Ali, Fatima, their sons and dependents to whom they restrict their appellation as well as the right to spiritual merit and political rule

Allah—has been used throughout in this book in the translation of the Holy Qur'ān, taken from Marmaduke Pickthall's *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'ān* As Pickhtall says he has retained the word Allah because there is no corresponding word in English The word *Allah* (the stress is on the last syllable) has neither feminine nor plural and has never been applied to anything other than the unimaginable Supreme Being

Amīr-ul-Muminīn —*Lit* The commander of the Faithful A title which was first given to the second Caliph, 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb and afterwards assumed by his successors

Asmā' ur-Rijāl.—*Lit* "The names of Men" A dictionary of biography, specially of those who handed down the Traditions of the Prophet

Ba'it —Oath of allegiance taken by the people for remaining faithful to the head of a Muslim State or any other person acknowledged as a spiritual guide

Bait ul-Māl —*Lit* 'The House of Property' The public treasury of a Islamic State, which the ruler is not allowed to use for his personel expenses, but only for the public good

Batiniyah.—*Lit* "inner, esoteric" They maintained that only a symbolic interpretation requiring gradual initiation by an illuminated teacher could reveal the real meanings of the Qur'ān The word they claimed, was like a veil, hiding the deep and occult meaning never attainable to those clinging to literal explanation Being a Shi'aite theological school of thought, they also upheld the doctrine of the divine source of the *Imāmat* (the spiritual leadership of Imām) and of the transmission by divinely ordained hereditary succession from the Caliph 'Ali The wide-spread Isma'ilite sect and its offsprings (Qarmatians Fatimides Assassins, etc) belong to the sphere of Batinite thought

Cadi.—The judge and the administrator of law appointed by the ruler of a Muslim State

Dīn.—The Arabic word for 'religion" Although sometimes used for an idolatrous religion, it is used specially for the religion of the prophets and their revealed scriptures

Dīn-i-Ilāhi.—Jalāl ud-dīn Muhammad Akbar, the great Mogul Emperor, had initiated a new religion entitled as *Dīn-i-Ilāhi* with the sole purpose of producing an amalgam of Hindu and Muslim faiths in order to strengthen and consolidate the Mogul empire People who embraced this faith had openly to forsake the conformist or orthodox Islam which, according to Akbar, had outlived its utility after a thousand years since its inception Although the new

religion claimed to embody the merits of all the religions without any prejudice, it favoured Hinduism and freely rejected or subjected to amendments the Islamic injunctions which were held to be retrogressive

Dinar.—A gold coin of the weight of ninety-six barley grains

Dirham.—A silver coin

Dozakh or Hell.—(also *Jahannum*) is the place of torment to which the sinners will be consigned on the Day of Judgement

Fardh.—That which is obligatory A term used for those rules and ordinances of religion which are said to have been established and enjoined by God Himself, as distinguished from those which are established on the precept or practice of the Prophet, and which are called *Sunnah*

Fardh-i-Kafāyah.—A command which is imperative upon all Muslims, but which if one person in a group performs it, it is sufficient or equivalent to all having performed it

Fatimides.—A Shiʿite dynasty of 13 Caliphs or *Imāms* in North-Africa (911-1171) and in Egypt (after 969) Unlike the other heads of the larger or smaller states emerging within the sphere of the ʿAbbasid Caliphate or which conceded to the Caliph, at least to save appearance, the Fatimides challenged the ʿAbbasids for both the temporal and spiritual power Beyond its political significance, however, it fulfilled the apocalyptic belief in the reign of Mahdi, an essential tenet of the Ismaʿilite branch of Shiaism Following were the Fatimide Caliphs

1 *	al-Mahdi ʿUbayd-Ullāh (911-934)	8	al-Mustansir (1035-1094)
		9	al-Mustaʿli (1094-1101)
2	al-Qaʿim (934-946)	10	al-Āmir (1101-1130)
3	al-Mansūr (946-952)	11	al-Hafiz (1130-1149)
4	al-Muʿizz (952-975)	12	al-Zāfir (1149-1154)
5	al-ʿAziz (975-996)	13	al-Fāʾiz (1154-1160)
6	al-Hakim (996-1021)	14	al-ʿĀbid (1160-1171)
7	al-Zāhir (1021-1035)		

Fatwa.—A formal answer to a question on Islamic law, submitted by a judge, an official body or also by private people to a doctor of religion The findings given as an answer to such questions are based on the Qurʾān and the Prophet's Tradition (*hadith*), on *ijmāʿ* (consensus of opinion) and *qiyās* (sound deductive reasoning)

Fiqah.—The dogmatic theology of Islam, specially that pertaining to jurisprudence

Hadith.—*See* Sunnah

Hajj.—*Lit* "setting out", or "tending towards" The pilgrimage to Mecca performed in the month of *Zil-Hijjah*, or the twelfth month of the Islamic year, is the fifth piller of Islam, and an incumbent religious duty for those who can afford the expenses It is founded upon express injunctions in

the Qur'ān

Hajr-i-Aswad.—*Lit* "Black Stone" At the north-east corner of the K'aba, near the door, is studded the famous black stone, at four or five feet above the ground Its colour is deep reddish brown, approaching to black Being kissed by the faithful after circumambulation of the K'aba, the *Hajr-i-Aswad* has been worn out to its present surface by the millions of touches and kisses it has received

Halāl—*Lit* "That which is untied or loose" That which is lawful, as distinguised from *harām*, or that which is unlawful

Harām.—*Lit* "prohibited" or that which is unlawful The word is used in both a good and a bad sense, e g *Bait ul-Harām*, the sacred house, and *Mal ul-Harām*, unlawful possession

A thing is said to be *harām* when it is forbidden, as opposed to that which is *halāl*, or lawful

Hijrah.—*Lit* "migration" The date of the Prophet Muhammad's departure from Mecca was the fourth day of Rabi'ul-Awwal (20th June, 622 A D) The *Hijrah* was instituted by Caliph 'Umar to refer events as happening before or after it, thus beginning the Islamic Calendar from the year of *Hijrah*

Hikmat—*Lit* "The Wisdom". The term is used to express the knowledge revealed in the Qur'ān

'Id.—The two Muslim feasts are *'Id al-Adh'ha* or the Feast of Sacrifice and *'Id ul-Fitr* or the Feast of Fast-Breaking at the end of the month of Ramadhan The former is held on the 10th of *Zil-Hijjah* which concludes the rituals of *Hajj*

Ijtihad.—*Lit* "Exertion" The logical deduction on a legal or theological question by a learned and enlightened doctor of religion, as distinguished from *Ijma'*, which is the collective opinion of a number of jurisprudents

'Ilm.—*see* 'Ulema

Imām—"One who leads", a normal guide or a model It commonly denotes in the Sunnite creed the leader of the congregation in prayer, who should be conversant with the ritual In the Shi'ah doctrine, however, the term covers an entirely different notion To them the *Imām* is the faultless and and infallible leader, an offspring of 'Ali, to whom spiritual leadership is supposed to have been passed on from the Prophet through his son-in-law and the fourth Caliph 'Ali

Islam—*Lit* 'The Surrender" to Allah i e the religion which the Prophet had established, with complete submission to the will of God, as its cardinal principle

Ismā'ilites.—Or seveners (*Sabāiyah*) was a group of extremist Shi'ahs, originating from a schism which took place in the Shi'ah community towards the end of the eighth century about the question of the succession of the seventh

Imām, Ismāʿīl The sixth *Imām*, Jaʿfar al-Sādiq, had disinherited Ismāʿīl in favour of his younger son Mūsa al-Kāzim but a faction of the Shiʿahs remained faithful to Ismāʿīl Later, the Ismāʿīlities proved their vitality under such different aspects as the terrorism of the Qarmātian sectaries, the caliphate of Fatimides, the Brethren of Purity and the once so dreaded Assassins (also *see* Batiniyah)

ʿItizal.—*Lit* "Seceded", the word is applied to the school of Wāsil ibn ʿAtā who broke away from Hasan al-Basri (Also see, *Muʿtazilah*)

Jabriyah—The sect denied free agency in man They take their denomination from *Jabr*, which signifies "necessity or compulsion", because they held man to be necessarily and inevitably constrained to act as he does by force of God's eternal and immutable decree They declared that reward and punishment are the effects of necessity and the same they said of the imposing of commands by a ruler

Jāhiliyah—(*Jahl*, Ignorance) or the Age of Ignorance is the name given to the period preceding Islam in Arabia It was mainly on account of the ignorance of religious truths and the materialistic way of life in the pre-Islamic times that the age was known as the Age of Ignorance The poetry of the *Jāhiliyah* period is generally considered as one of the greatest contribution to Arabic literature

Jahmiyah—A sect founded by Jahm ibn Safwān (717) He borrowed from the *Murjiʿite* sect the doctrine that true faith is founded on conviction independently of external manifestations and from the *Muʿtazilites*, the rejection of all anthropomorphic attributes of God Unlike *Muʿtazilites*, *Jahmiyah* believed in absolute predestination, that man has neither power nor choice in deciding his actions Thus Jahm ibn Safwān was a precursor of *Jabriyah* (Determinists or Necessitarians) who survived until the XIth Century

Jannat or Paradise—Is the celestial abode of bliss to which the righteous will be sent on the Day of Judgment

Jazyah—Or poll-tax is levied, in an Islamic State, on those non-Muslims who choose to live as a citizen under it Such citizens of an Islamic State obtain security on the payment of poll-tax and are exempted from compulsory military duty to which Muslim citizen are liable

Jihād—*Lit* "An effort, or a striving" A religious war which is a duty extending to all times, against those who seek to destroy Islam or put hinderances in the way of religious observance

Kaʿba—*Lit* "The Cube' The most venerated sanctuary of Islam, situated in the centre of the Great Mosque of Mecca

Khatīb—*Lit* The preacher of a sermon or oration delivered on Friday at the time of congregational prayer on that day The *Khutba* is also recited on the two festivals of *ʿId ul-Fitr* and *ʿId ul-Adh'ha*

Khilafat-i-Rāshida—The expression is restricted to the rule of first four

successors of the Prophet who ruled over the community strictly in accordance with the tenets of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* These were, Abū Bakr, 11 A H (632 A D), ʿUmar, 13 A H (634 A D), ʿUthman, 23 A H. (643 A D) and ʿAlī, 35-40 A H (655-660 A D) Al-Hasan who succeeded ʿAlī but later resigned in favour of Muaʿwiyah is also include by some among the right-guided caliphs

Liʿān—Divorcing by mutual cursing of husband and wife

Maʿād—or requital in the Hereafter is an article of Muslim faith It calls for belief in the Day of Judgement, the Resurrection, man's presence in the Divine court, and the administration of reward and punishment in accordance with his faith and actions

Mamlūk—*Lit* "Slave", the designation of a caste formed by imported slaves serving in the army

Masah—The touching of earth for purification where water is not available for ritual ablution

Malaʾikah—*Lit* "The Angels". The angels as created beings are only Divine messengers, faithful executors of the commands of God and have nothing of Godhead about them

Maulana—*Lit* "Lord", a honorific title used for religious scholars

Millat—The word occurs in the Qur'ān several times for the religion of Abraham Hence it stands for those who are the followers of a prophet

Mujaddid—*One who revives and restores Islam*

Muqām-i-Ibrāhīm—Lit "The place or station of Abraham" adjacent to Kʿaba, within the boundry of the Holy Mosque, which contains the sacred stone upon which Abraham stood when he built the Kʿaba

Muʿtazilah—*Lit* "The separatists" A school of thought founded by Wāsil ibn ʿAtāʾ, who separated from the school of Hasan al-Basri The chief tenets of the school were (1) They rejected all eternal attributes of God saying that eternity is the proper or formal attribute of His essence, that God knows by His essence, and not by His knowledge, that to affirm these attributes is the same thing as to make more eternals than one, and that the Unity of God is inconsistent with such an opinion. (2) They believed the word of God (Qur'ān) to have been created, and whatever was created is also an accident, and liable to perish (3) They held that if any Muslim is guilty of grievous sin, and dies without repentance, he will be eternally damned (4) They also denied all vision of God in Paradise by the corporeal eye, and rejected all comparisons or similitude applied to God

During the reign of the ʿAbbasid Caliphs, al-Mamūn, al-Muʿtasim and al-Wāthiq (198-233 A H), the Muʿtazilah were in high favour

Nabīd—An exhilarating but not intoxicating drink, prepared from barley

Nabūwat—The office or work of a *nabi* or a prophet, who is directly

inspired by God and to whom a special mission has been entrusted.

Nifāq—*Lit* Hypocrisy A term applied by the Qur'ān (*munafiqīn*) for a class of people who in the days of the Prophet professed to follow him. It therefore applies to anyone who publicly professes to believe in Islam but hides infidelity in one's heart

Qadriyah—Ma'bad al-Juhaim (d 699 A D.) was the first to discuss the problem of the freedom of will He proclaimed that man held power (*qadr*) over his actions, and consequently, the tyrants and cruel kings and rulers were responsible for their unjust deeds They were the ancient *Mu'tazilites* before al-Wasil separated from the school of Hasan al-Basri

Qaramita—An extremely radical branch of the *Isma'ilite* group of the *Shi'ah* sect called after its founder Hamdān Qarmāt, in existence from the IXth until the middle of the XIth century Hamdān Qarmāt preached a crudely materialistic communism to the masses, a mystical agnosticism to a selected elite, and a hostile contempt for orthodox ethics to all Ruthless terrorism was proclaimed as the means to achieve ultimate happiness

Qur'ān—The sacred book of Islam which is believed to be the revealed word of God to the Prophet Muhammad. It differs from other religious scriptures in so far as they are believed to be mere Divine inspirations and not revealed word by word to their writers.

Rak'at—(pl Rak'ah) A unit of prayer consisting of two prostrations and one genuflection

Rami—The throwing of pebbles at the pillers, or Jumrah at Mecca, as a part of religious ceremony during the (*hajj*) pilgrimage

Ramadhan—Is the ninth month of Islamic year during which Muslims keep fast from dawn till sunset

Risālat—The office of an apostle or prophet As against *nabi* (prophet), the *rasūl* (apostle) is one to whom a special mission has been entrusted although a scripture may not have been revealed to him

Rozah or Saum—Means fasting It is one of the obligatory observances of Islam enjoined by the Qur'ān The thirty days fasting during the month of *Ramadhan* is regarded as a divine institution, and is therefore a compulsory observance for all excepting those who are not in a position to keep the fast from dawn till sunset

Sabaq—Giving precedence to certain rituals of *Hajj* which are to be performed after others

Sakharah or Qubbatus-Sakharah—To the north-west of the Dome of the Rock, a small but beautiful cupola on a raised platform houses the sacred rock which was used as the place for sacrificial offerings by Abraham and later prophets of Bani Israel

Salāt—Is the second of the five fundamental observances in Islam It is a devotional exercise which every Muslim is required to render to God five

times a day It is a duty frequently enjoined in the Qur'ān

Salat Ul-Zuha—A special but voluntary prayer performed halfway between the morning and mid-day prayers

Sharī'ah—The law, including both the teachings of the Qur'ān and of the Traditions (actions and sayings) of the Prophet

Sheikh—A title accorded to the venerable doctors of religion It is used in addressing theological scholars who have acquired a certain spiritual prominence, without necessarily holding a religious office

Shī'ah—*Lit* 'Split' and also 'followers'—a general designation covering various Islamic sects not following the conformist or orthodox faith The schism whose origin goes back to the early years of Islam had its beginnings in the rivalry for the caliphate between the Ummayyad and 'Alid clans after Caliph 'Ali's death and Mu'awiyah's (the first Ummayyad) accession to the caliphate The 'Alid partly maintained that this highest office of Islam was a prerogative of the Prophet's house They also maintained that 'Ali was the first legitimate *Imām* or successor to the Prophet and therefore rejected the first three successors of the Prophet The belief in this regard later developed into a faith that the Prophet's God-willed spiritual and secular guidance had passed from him to 'Ali who, himself an incarnation of the Divine Spirit, had bequeathed his mission to a sequence of hereditary *Imāms* of his progeny On this soil was set up a theological framework which left ample room for the most varied opinions, some of them hard on the borderline of Islam

Sūfi—One who professes the mystic principles for attaining the gnosis of God

Sunnah—As opposed to the Qur'ān which is a direct revelation from God, the Prophet also received what is regarded as *wahī ghair amlu'* or an unread revelation which enabled him to give authoritative declarations on religious questions The Arabic words used for these traditions are *Hadith* and *Sunnah* (a saying and a custom) The Prophet gave very special instructions respecting the faithful transmission of his sayings Gradually, however, spurious Traditions also gained currency for which an elaborate canon of subjective and and historical criticism was evolved for the reception or rejection of the Traditions

The *Sunnah* represents an authentic interpretation of the Qur'ān, a valuable source of law and an infallible guide for the overwhelming majority of Muslims in every situation of their spiritual and secular life as opposed to *Bid'ah* (innovation)

Sunnī—*Lit* 'One of the path' A term generally applied to the overwhelming majority of the Muslims who consider the *sunnah* of the Prophet, manifested by his sayings, acts or tacit approval and transmitted by the companions of the Prophet, as the infallible guide of the faithful and an authentic interpretation of the Qur'ān

abandonment to spiritual illumination and divine inspiration

Wājib—*Lit* 'That which is obligatory'. A term used in Islamic law for those injunctions, the non-observance of which constitutes sin, but the denial of which does not attain to downright infidelity.

Zakāt—*Lit* it means purification, whence it is used to express a portion of property bestowed in alms, as a sanctification of the remainder of the property. The institution is founded on the command in the Qur'ān (*vide* Surah *II* : 83), being one of the five obligatory observances enjoined for the believer The fixed amount of property and the rate of the poor-due, varies with reference to the different kinds of property in possession

Zihār—Husbands divorcing the wife by likening her to any kinswomen within the prohibited degree.

Zimmī—A non-Muslim subject of an Islamic state who, for the payment of a poll-tax or capitation-tax, enjoys security of his person and property and other civic rights

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THE END

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Volume II

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FOREWORD

I am glad to present the second volume of the Saviours of Islamic Spirit before the readers. The first volume of the book covered the revivalist endeavours made during the first six centuries of the Islamic era, from Caliph 'Umar ibn Abdul Azīz to Maulānā Jalāl ud-dīn Rūmī. In this volume the biographical accounts, thoughts and achievements of three luminaries of the eighth century after Hijrah are sought to be presented.

In the Urdu version of this book, the second volume had to be exclusively devoted to Sheikh-ul-Islam Ibn Taimiyah because his splendid achievements in the intellectual and religious fields were quite extensive and varied. It is not at all extravagant to see the reverberating influence of Ibn Taimiyah's thought in the generations succeeding him. Of late, the more intelligent and educated section of the Muslims has shown even greater interest in the works and researches of Ibn Taimiyah. However, I considered it appropriate to include in the present volume the accounts of two more personalities, dealt with in the third part of its Urdu version, since all the three belong to the eighth century. These luminaries of Islam—Sheikh-ul-Islām Hafiz Ibn Taimiyah, Sultān-ul-Auliā Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn Aulīā and Makhdūm-ul-Mulk Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn Yahyā Manerī—differ not only in time and space but also in their temperaments, efforts and achievements; yet, one would see a significant similarity of common ideal for which they all worked throughout their lives. All of them fought against

internal deterioration caused by ignorance of the masses, protested against external encroachments of alien thought and customs and called a halt to the decadence of Muslim society by summoning it back to the original purity and order of Islam. Their techniques differed according to their circumstances and needs of the time, but they all tried to re-create the true bonds of relationship between the believer and the Supreme Being.

It has to be borne in mind, in this context, that by the middle of the eighth century the centre of Islamic religious and intellectual activities had shifted itself to India where a powerful Muslim power had been firmly established. Simultaneously, the ravages of the Mongols had destroyed all traces of culture and civilization from Turkistan and Persia, in the east, to Syria and borders of Egypt, in the west, and extinquished the lamp of Abbasid Caliphate for ever. For several hundred years to come, India had to assume the educational and intellectual and and religious and spiritual leadership of the world of Islam. A historian has thus inevitably to turn his attention to this new centre of Islam. It is for this reason that a portion of this volume and one or two subsequent volumes, whenever they are written, would have to be devoted to the revivalist movement in this country.

The reader will find in this volume a new religious dimension of Islam revealed by Makhdūm Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn Yahyā Manerī. This is the inner and esoteric dimension of Islam, with its own peculiar concepts, imageries and modes of expression, experienced in a new environment and set forth not in Arabic but in Persian, which had by then become the cultural lingua-franca of Turkistan, Persia and India. Mohi ud-dīn Ahmad must have found it difficult to render this portion in English, but, as far as I have been able to see, he has acquitted himself well of this onerous task. The difficult nature of his undertaking will be realised by those who have had to describe essentially eastern religious experiences in a foreign language like English.

With this brief prologue, I place this volume in the hands of my readers. I hope that they would welcome it as enthusiastically as they had received the earlier part of the book.

Lucknow,
Shawwal 14, 1334
October 31, 1974

Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

TRANSLITERATION

The dashes to mark the long vowels : ā as in far; ū as in loose : ī as in mean have been retained, leaving other conventional signs. Two more signs ᶜ and ᵓ representing the Arabic *ain* and *hamza* have also been retained. The sounds of K and dj used in the Encyclopaedia of Islam have been replaced by q and j respectively, which are now in common use. Where the two consonants—*ch, dh, gh, kh, sh,* and *th* have been used, these are to be sounded together, as, for example, *ch* in 'church', *sh* in 'ship' and *th* in 'think'. The sound of *gh* resembles *gz* as in 'exact', that of *kh* is like *ch* in Scottish *loch* or the German *ach* and *dh* gives the sound *th* in 'father'. Wherever the two consonants are desired to give their own sounds separately, an apostrophe has been inserted in between as, for example, in *Ad'ham, Is'haq,* etc.

However, where any proper noun is in common use in English or its pronunciation is generally known to the English-speaking people no signs have been used.

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SHEIKH-UL-ISLAM

HAFIZ IBN TAIMIYAH

Sheikh-ul-Islam

HAFIZ IBN TAIMIYAH

I

Muslim World in the Seventh Century

Maulana Jalāl ud-dīn Rūmī had sought to refute the excessive rationalism of the dialecticians which was permeated with the spirit of Greek Philosophy and excessive formalism. Rūmī was, in fact, founder of a new school of scholasticism which was based on a greater sense of realism and profundity of thought than its earlier counterpart, dialectics, the dominant feature of which was employment of cold logical argumentation. Rūmī's thought was grounded in the personal experiences of a sublimated soul, a purified heart and an illuminated self. He was not simply an erudite scholar of religion and a teacher of dialectics, but was also blessed with a keen intellect and an enlightened heart. He was disgusted by syllogism and vain disputation of the dialectics, when he was led by a God-moved soul, through prayer and penance and the grace of God, to the lofty heights of the certitude of knowledge. He soon realised that dialectics was more of an exercise in specious reasoning, an art of confounding one's adversary than propounding the truth. He, therefore, adopted another method of expounding the mysteries of mute reality and metaphysical truths which reposed trust in the

intuitive experience, intimate and personal, for that could be felt deeply in the core of one's heart.

But, something more was needed to combat the evil effects of philosophy and dialectics. Theological philosophy, too, delved into the secrets of imperceptible realities and freely discussed the nature and attributes of the Supreme Being. Islam had not left man groping in the gloom of uncertainty in so far as the postulates of faith are concerned; instead, it had expounded these matters in a much more lucid and easy manner intelligible to all and sundry. For every ethical theory shaping the behaviour of an individual or the culture of a society must be rooted in the philosophical conception of the relationship between man and Ultimate Reality; it had of necessity to be set forth by Islam quite clearly so that no further speculative effort was needed in that direction. The prophets alone, declared Islam, were the fount of knowledge in regard to the realities beyond the ken of human perception and the unverifiable, incomprehensible Ultimate Being; and, therefore, their teachings constituted the last word on a subject which could not be adequately comprehended by man's intellect. The philosophy had, for that reason, no right, no *locus standi*, to intrude in a matter of which it did not possess even rudimentary knowledge—the basic premises from which it could infer the logical conclusions drawn by it. But the questions which philosophy sought to discuss did not simply admit any analysis or speculation, nor were the philosophers capable of undertaking the task; but, curiously enough, philosophy considered it prudent to meddle with them, trying to explain and elucidate and even to bring in its verdict on them. The constant aim of its endeavour was to trace every question down to its source and discover the general principles underlying every metaphysical phenomenon as if it were an organic matter capable of being analysed in a laboratory.

Dialectics came into existence to answer the questions raised by philosophy. But, it soon absorbed the spirit of its adversary and itself turned into a theological philosophy, discussing those very questions, employing the same claim of reasoning and

trying, like philosophy, to ascertain the nature and attributes of the Divine Being through the speculative categories of reasoning. In fine, dialectics, too, turned a deaf ear to the teachings of the prophets of God, and, placing reliance on limited human intellect, tried to explain the inexplicable in terms of Greek metaphysical terminology borrowed from philosophy. All this vain effort resulted in complication and concealment of the truth behind a veil of words and phrases although the nature and attributes of Divinity could have been explained in a simple, direct and intelligible manner to the satisfaction of all minds, and capable of enkindling everyone's heart. The task could have indeed been accomplished in the light of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, but the dialecticians preferred to compile voluminous treatises on philosophic interpretation of the simple tenets of faith which betrayed how far it was influenced by Greek thought even though it claimed to refute the latter. This was a development opposed to the spirit of the teachings of the Qur'ān and the Traditions, and, accordingly, a sizable section of the Muslims never agreed with the views put forth by the dialecticians. Still, a savant of religious sciences with a penetrating intellect, extensive knowledge and firm conviction in the revealed truth was needed at that time for expounding the creed and its doctrines in a faithful yet convincing manner.

Islam was, at that time, confronted with several other internal and external dangers. A new evangelical movement was taking shape amongst the Christians which sought to censure Islam and set up Christianity as the only saving principle for humanity. The incessant attacks by the Crusaders on Palestine along with the presence of a large number of Christians of European origin in Syria and Cyprus had emboldened them to criticize the prophethood of Muhammad, to compose works on the truthfulness of Christianity and to invite the Muslims to debate and argumentation.

Another danger, rather more severe and hurtful to Islam was that posed by a so-called Muslim sect known as Bātinites. It had a peculiar creed interwoven from the texture of

Magian dogma, Platonic concepts and dangerous political ambitions, and its followers like Ismā'ilites, Assassins, Drūzes and Nusayrīs were always too willing to help the enemies of the Muslims. Not unoften were foreign aggressions the result of conspiracies hatched by the Bātinites. They sided with the crusaders when the latter attacked Syria and Palestine and were awarded with offices of dignity and confidence when the Christians established themselves in Syria. Throughout the reign of Zengī and Ayyubid dynasties the Bātinites continued to conspire against the then Muslim sovereigns and, when the Tartar hordes invaded the Muslim lands, they joined hands with them to make common cause against Islam. Besides this, by posing themselves as a sect of the Muslims, they could easily sow the seeds of intellectual dissension and spread irreligiousness and apostasy among the simple-minded folk. In order, therefore, to warn the Muslims from being further duped by the Bātinites and also to punish them for the abominable crimes already committed by them, it was necessary to expose their nefarious activities and blasphemous beliefs.

Apart from these, free intercourse with non-Muslims, certain external influences and the indolence of the then doctors of religion had all combined to introduce among Muslims certain impious ideas running counter to the concept of Unity and overlordship of God Almighty Like the Jews and Christians, the Muslims had begun to glorify their saints and elevated souls as those nearer to God exercising some of the Divine functions. Acting on the pagan principle—We worship them only that they may bring us near unto Allah[1]—even the educated saw no harm in supplicating to the departed souls and martyrs or resorted to practices worshipful in manners and gestures even though the Prophet of Islam had strictly forbidden his followers to indulge in such practices. The careless and unguarded believer often yielded to the temptation of participating in feasts and festivals of the non-Muslim *zimmis* and adopted their manners and customs

1. Q. XIXX : 3

which wore the appearance of harmless pleasure or innocent entertainment. The polytheistic beliefs and customs of the non-Muslims being closely interwoven with every circumstance of their private and public life, the untutored minds of the Muslim laity were artfully led to withdraw their adoration from the Creator to the abominable associates of divinity. In order to warn the Muslims against these impious ideas and practices which were destructive of the religious value of orthodox Islam, it was necessary to start a reformative movement which could maintain the purity of faith by uprooting irreligious rituals and practices.

On the other side, certain indiscreet schools of mysticism in Islam had, for reasons intellectual as well as those pertaining to their development, absorbed neo-Platonic and Hindu doctrine of initiation in divine mysteries. These mystical-ascetic attitudes had been so mixed up with the Islamic beliefs and doctrines that it had become difficult to distinguish one from the other. The popular thought of the Muslim mystics showed visible traces of neo-Plantonic gnosticism and Hindu pantheism, incarnation and union, cult of esoteric meanings and hidden realities and antinomian practices. Although some of the eminent leaders of mystic thought had vehemently protested against these doctrines, still, a large part of the *sūfīs* insisted on them and quite a few of them even resorted to wonder-working and magic spells. A misguided sect of the Rafāʿīyah mystic order, which was quite popular in the seventh and the eighth century of the Islamic era, had taken to divination, charms and wonder-working as a spiritual instrument. Thus, the *sūfīs*, with their tremendous influence on the uneducated masses, were spreading ideas completely divorced from the Qurʾānic system of thought.

In the intellectual circles, too, rigidity and stagnation had overtaken the theologians who considered it a grievous sin to deviate from the corpus of their own juristic schools. In their disputes over theological differences, they tried to interpret the canon in accordance with their own cherished views instead of subordinating their interpretations to the supremacy of the

Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. The doors of legislative process which imparts dynamism to the legal system had almost been closed. The demands of the changing social problems required study of the entire corpus of legal doctrines of the earlier legists and thinkers, an insight into the teachings of the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*, academic research and intellectual effort in the light of accepted juristical norms but the rigidity of approach on the part of the then theologians had so numbed their intellectual capabilities that nobody dared to re-interpret the Law for keeping it abreast of the changing conditions. The legal system of Islam had thus lost its originality and dynamism, thanks to the erroneous view that nothing could now be added to the *corpus juris* of the *Sharī'ah* already formulated by the earlier teachers.

These were, broadly, the disruptive forces which had to be counteracted by a systematic effort before any movement of Islamic renaissance could be started. In its conflict with the speculative reasoning applied by the dialecticians, Islam required a doctor of religion deeply versed in all the categories of philosophy and dialectics, their points of difference and their growth and development. For the polemical disputes raised by the Christians, a man of vast learning fully acquainted with Christianity as well as other religions, especially their original scriptures and the amendments and interpolations to which these had been subjected from time to time, was needed who could undertake a comparative study of the different religions. Similarly, the Bātinite heresy could be combated only by a man who was fully conversant with the beliefs and dogmas of all the Bātinite sects. The reform needed for eradication of external influences, rites and customs and such other un-Islamic practices as saint-worship required a doctor of faith not only animated by zeal for Islam and abhorrence of polytheistic cults but also capable of distinguishing clearly Islam from un-Islam and discerning even the faint traces of the pagan past. He had had to learn the lesson of unalloyed *Tawhīd* directly from the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, and follow in the foot-steps of the companions of the holy Prophet rejecting all those prevalent practices of his

time which cut across the true concept of the Oneness of God. The revitalisation of the intellectual effort required a master-mind—a theologian, a Traditionist and a legist, all combined into one—a man who had mastered the entire theological literature, had such a command over the Qur'ān and the Traditions that anything not acceptable to him could easily be rejected as untrustworthy; was deeply-versed in the lexicography, grammar and usage of the Arabic language; had an encyclopaedic knowledge of all the juristic schools; had a developed sense of interpreting the rules of the *Sharī'ah* and drawing analogical inferences from the teachings and practices of the earlier masters; and, lastly, he had to have been endowed with an incisive intellect and prodigious retentive memory like the Traditionists of the earlier times bearing testimony to what was thus predicted by the Prophet of Islam: "The parable of my people is that of rain: nobody knows whether its beginning is better or its last."[1]

Thus the man of the hour was to have not only mastered all the religious and secular sciences but he was also to possess all the ennobling qualities of mind and heart, a penetrating intellect, logical thinking, mental grasp, breadth of vision and encyclopaedic knowledge so that he could be held in the highest esteem as an illustrious scholar and master by his contemporaries. He had also to be a man of spirits so that he could willingly put his life at stake for what he deemed to be right. If, on the one hand, religious and political opponents of Bātinites were being eliminated by terrorism and murder, any effort to oppose the popular *sūfī* orders was, on the other, likely to earn the displeasure of the masses as well as the ruling elite. Similarly, the slightest deviation from the views held by earlier legists was sure to be condemned as impious and irreligious inviting severe condemnation by the then doctors of religion. Thus, the man aiming at the reconstruction of the religious life and thought of the then Muslim society had to have the courage to

1. *Tirmizī* on the authority of Anas ibn Mālik

set his face against the then governments and the chiefs of State, the misguided *ʿulama* and the popular opinion of the time, and be willing to fight relentlessly on all fronts for the restoration of the true faith. Such was the man needed by the world of Islam in the eighth century after Hijrah, and it did find him in the person of Sheikh-ul-Islam Ibn Taimiyah, who, by his single-minded devotion and idealism yoked with a strong practical sense, erudite scholarship and dauntless courage rescued the world of Islam from the rut of intellectual lethargy and demoralisation.

Political and Social Conditions

For a proper assessment of the achievements of Ibn Taimiyah it is necessary to touch upon the complex of political, social, religious and intellectual atmosphere of the time within which Ibn Taimiyah had to struggle for renovation of Islamic thought and social life. It was, indeed, a critical period of Islamic history, beset by fast moving events.

Five years had elapsed since the sack of Baghdad and three years after the capture of Haleb (Aleppo) and Damascus by the Mongols, when Ibn Taimiyah was born. As a child he must have heard the stories of cruelty and barbarism of the Tartar hordes invading the Muslim lands. When he was seven years of age, his home town of Herran, situate in the north of Mongol occupied territory of Iraq, falling between the rivers of Euphrates and Tigris, was invaded by the Tartars. Like numerous other people belonging to that town his own family moved on towards Damascus to seek a place of safety. Everywhere he saw people terror-stricken, appalled and panicky, running away for their life in utter confusion and disorder. Later on, he could never forget the stupefied people scared to death by the brutality of the Tartar legions. Ibn Taimiyah would have also seen the destruction wrought by the barbarian Tartar legions and heard of the innumerable stories of terrifying cruelty perpetrated by them which must have raised a storm of hatred in his bosom against the brutal invaders and aroused the feelings

of sympathy and compassion for the unfortunate victims of unprecedented tyranny.

At the same time, he must have also heard of the brilliant victory won by Al-Malik al-Zāhir Baibers only three years before his birth at ʿAin Jalūt. It might have imparted to his agitated heart, as to many others of his time, a sense of satisfaction and reassuring confidence in the sword-arm of Islam.

The Memlūks of Egypt

About twelve years before Ibn Taimiyah was born, the Memlūks had taken over the administration of Egypt and Syria. The Memlūks, who were also known as *Bahriyah*,[1] were the Turk slaves of the last Ayyubid Sultan Al-Malik Al-Sāleh Ayyūb (d. 647 A.H.). One of these Memlūks, ʿIzz ud-dīn Aibeck al-Turkmānī had ascended the throne under the title of Al-Malik al-Muʿīz in 647 A.H. after putting to sword Turān Shah, the descendent of Al-Malik al-Sāleh. He was succeeded by his son Nūr ud-dīn ʿAlī when he was killed in 655 A.H. Nūr ud-dīn ʿAli was overthrown by Saif ud-dīn Katz, once the Prime Minister of ʿIzz ud-dīn Aibeck in 657 A.H. He was the first Memlūk Sultan who gave a crushing defeat to the Tartars. However, only a year after Saif ud-dīn Katz donned the purple, he was slain by Rukn ud-dīn Baibers, who was also a slave of Al-Malik al-Saleh Najm ud-dīn Ayyūb. Baibers ascended the throne with the title of Al-Malik al-Zāhir and ruled over Egypt for eighteen years. He won splendid victories over the invading crusaders and Tartars.

When Ibn Taimiyah was born, Egypt and Syria were ruled by Al-Malik al-Zahir Baibers and when the latter died, Ibn Taimiyah was fifteen years of age. Baibers was the first Muslim sovereign who consolidated his forces to give many a crushing defeat to the enemies of Islam. Ibn Kathīr writes of him in

1. Meaning the sea-man, they had derived this name from *Bahr* or sea, as river Nile is called. Memlūks had their settlements by the side of river Nile.

Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah :

"Capable, courageous and brave, Baibers was always alive to the dangerous designs of his enemies and ready to meet the threat from any quarter. He endeavoured to strengthen the disorganised Muslim power. Raised by Providence to reorganise and strengthen the dejected and decimated Muslim forces, he was, in truth, like a thorn in the flesh of Tartars and Crusaders. He put a ban on the sale of wine and expelled the hardened criminals from his dominions. He could never take rest until the wickedness or wrong brought to his notice was set right."[1]

Baibers held sway over the territories extending from the river Euphrates in the East to the farthest limits of Sudan in the South, with Egypt as its centre and Cairo as its Capital. The large number of educational institutions established by Baibers and the presence of the Abbāsid Caliph Al-Mustansir b'Illāh in Egypt had attracted many renowned doctors of religion to Cairo which had thus become the nerve-centre of political, intellectual and cultural activities in the East.

Baibers was animated by a genuine feeling of love for Islam and fighting in the way of God, but he was arrogant and high-handed also as the autocrat sovereigns generally are. The annalists of his time have listed numerous acts of his haughty and despotic behaviour along with the brilliant victories won by him. One of these incidents relates to his regrettable misbehaviour with Imām Nawavī.[2]

The kingdom of Egypt and Syria ruled for eighteen long years by Baibers so quickly changed hands after his death that nine sultans ascended the throne within 33 years between 676 A.H. to 709 A.H. During this period only one ruler of grit and ability presided over this Islamic Kingdom. He was Al-Malik al-Mansūr Saif ud-dīn Qalāwoon who inflicted a crushing defeat on the Tartars in 678 A.H. and liberated Tripolis from the

1. Ibn Kathīr, Vol. XIII, p. 276
2. *Tabaqāt-us-Shāfe'iyah*, Vol. V, p. 168

crusaders after 185 years of Christian domination over the city. He donned the Imperial purple for twelve years from 678 A.H. to 689 A.H. but after his death the kingdom again fell to the lot of incompetent rulers. At last Mansūr Qalawoon's son Al-Malik al-Nāsir Muhammad ibn Qalawoon wielded the sceptre of authority for the third time in 709 A.H. and ruled over the kingdom for the next thirty-two years. Muhammad ibn Qalawoon was the contemporary sovereign during whose rule Ibn Taimiyah held aloft the banner of reform and renovation. Blessed with several qualities of mind and heart like Baibers and his own father Mansūr Qalawoon, he became a source of unity and strength to his kingdom. He too, like his predecessors, dealt smashing defeats upon the Tartars.

During the whole of this period, Iraq, Iran and Khurasan continued to smother under the despotic control of the Tartars. Baghdad was not restored to the Muslims until its Tartar ruler embraced Islam. The Abbāsid Caliph of Egypt himself led an expedition against Iraq and Baibers too made several attempts to regain Iraq, but none of these efforts proved successful. Memlūks, however, held the reign of government over Egypt, Sudan, Syria and Hejaz.

System of Government

The State religion of the Memlūk sultanate was Islam ; the kings and the nobles believed in and adored Islam ; fought for its defence ; ecclesiastical dignitaries like Qāzīs and Sheikh-ul-Islams were regularly appointed by the State ; the *Sharī'ah* was enforced as the law of the land ; educational institutions, free from State control, imparted religious instruction ; but, despite all these the sultans were the pivot of politico-military structure of government. All decisions ultimately rested with the King and his counsellors, which, sometimes, even limited the operation of the *Sharī'ah* laws. In its structure and organisation, it was a military oligrachy without any constitution, a codified law or a consultative body.

Al-Malik al-Zāhir Baibers and other Memlūk sultans,

undoubtedly, always tried to obtain the support of the religious leaders and if the *ʿulama* ever strongly opposed any measure of the government, it was postponed or given up. When Imām Nawavī strongly condemned the royal edict to confiscate all the fiefs of landlords in Egypt and Syria, Baibers expressed his displeasure with the Imām and forced him to leave Damascus, but he could not enforce his decision and the *status quo* was maintained. The entire administrative organ rested on the hereditary system but it was often disrupted by a powerful military general. In fine, it was not founded on the Islamic principles of polity. A system of government congenial to Islamic thought and spirit required the head of the State to be a capable ruler enjoying the confidence of the community. Memlūk sultanate, just the other way, owed its existence solely to the personal grit and ambition of the rulers. The Memlūk traditions of absolute monarchy, powerful aristocracy and increasing concentration of military power enabled the ambitious military leaders to wrest power whenever such an opportunity arose. The slaves of Ayyūbid dynasty took over the empire from their masters, thanks chiefly to their own effort; courage and prowess. Although every Memlūk sultan tried to ensure that one of his sons wielded the sceptre after him, the Memlūk tradition re-asserted itself time and again, and whenever an opportunity was afforded, a valiant and zestful general replaced the rightful prince. This, naturally, encouraged internal conflict and civil war to get hold of the reigns of government, but the Memlūks always united to face any threat of aggression from the Tartar or the Crusaders' quarters.

Moral and Social conditions

The ruling class of the Turkoman tribes was conscious of its superiority and kept itself aloof from the local populatlon. It spoke Turkish dialects and used Arabic only for offering prayers or conversing with the religious leaders and the local population. Most of them, however, knew Arabic barely sufficient to perform the obligatory religious duties. Nevertheless, they

respected the doctors of faith, the pious and the elect, constructed mosques and *madrasās* and did not discriminate against anyone on grounds of race or language. Still, the higher civil and military assignments went to the Turkoman elite. Similarly, most of the grandees, noblemen and landlords holding fiefs in lieu of military services were Turkomans who made economic gains at the expense of the cultivators and labourers. An effort made by Hosam ud-dīn Lājeen in 697 A.H. to redistribute the agricultural holdings for improving the economic conditions of the tillers of the soil proved abortive as the Turkoman chiefs opposing the measure rose in revolt against him.

Another influential section of the urban population in Syria and Egypt consisted of the Tartar prisoners of war who had settled, in large numbers, in these lands. These countries were full of them, as al-Maqrīzī reports, during the reign of Al-Malik al-Zāhir Baibers and their manners and customs had percolated into the local population. They embraced Islam, no doubt, but, they also continued to adhere to their national characteristics, habits and customs. There were really only a few examples of the new converts to Islam adopting the ethical and social ideals of their new faith marking a total break with their past cultural traditions, manners and morals. It was a distinctive characteristic of the Prophet's companions alone, who, as if transformed by a Prophetic miracle, eschewed all traces of the conflict between their adopted faith and the pagan past. They appeared, in truth, to have been reborn in Islam. This could not have been expected of the converts of a later age when there was neither any arrangement for their guidance and training in the Islamic way of life nor was the Muslim society dynamic enough to absorb and re-fashion the new entrants into its fold. The social life of these Tartar neo-Muslims was, for these reasons, an admixture of Islamic outlook and pagan traditions. The famous historian of Egypt, al-Maqrīzī, who has summed up all that he found floating down the stream of time describes the social and religious behaviour of these new converts to Islam in these words :

"These Tartars had learnt, in the Muslim countries, to

read the Qur'ān and adhered to religious canons and observances but their life was an amalgam of vices and virtues. They subjected themselves to the decisions of the Chief Qāzī in matters relating to prayer, fasting, poor-due, *Haj*, charitable endowments, administration of the property of orphans and the disputes between the espouses but in their personal matters, habits and behaviour, they followed the Mongol traditions and the laws promulgated by Chenghiz Khan. They had appointed an administrator known as *Hājib* to adjudicate upon matters falling in the sphere of their customary law, to restore justice to the weak amongst them and to impose sanctions against the bully and strong. Disputes between the Tartar traders in commercial matters as well as those relating to property and land holdings were also decided in accordance with their own traditional laws."[1]

The increasing tendency of the local population to adopt the Tartar usages even to the extent of accepting some of the inapt ideas was outcome of free intermixing of the Tartar and the Arab Muslims. A parallel example of the interchange of ideas culminating into a mutual absorption of each other's cultural strains and thought patterns can be seen in the contact between Europe and Asia which first began in the battle-fields during the Crusades.

The free intermixing of different nationalities had thus given birth to a new society, neither Arab nor Islamic in its make up, which had brought to the fore new social and cultural problems. This had, naturally, increased manifold the responsibility of those religious doctors and reformers who abhorred un-Islamic beliefs and practices adopted by the Muslims. They wanted to bring the Muslim society back to the path chalked out by the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*—a path treaded by the earlier preceptors in compliance with the Divine Command : Enter wholly into submission (unto Him).[2]

1. *Khutat-i-Misr*, Vol. II, p. 221
2. Q. II : 208

Intellectual Atmosphere

Barring a few exceptions we find in the century preceding Ibn Taimiyah widespread educational efforts and plentiful writings on numerous subjects. But, by and large, most of the literature produced during this period lacks depth of thought and profundity and can be classified as elucidations and interpretations of the earlier works. This lack of originality was an outcome of the stratification of juristic schools which, content to remain within the inviolable bounds of their own making, rejected the least deviation from the teachings of their masters. In principle, all the four juristic schools of orthodox Islam were deemed to be right, but the votaries of each regarded the interpretation of their own school as the only faithful version of the Divine ordinances. The only consideration they could show to others was to concede that the exposition of the Law by their own *Imām* though largely correct might contain a few mistakes, but that of the others were likely to be correct only on a few points but were much more faulty.

The followers of every juristic school, then, considered their own sect to be rightly guided, correct and God ordained while the chief effort of their learned theologians had been diverted towards producing arguments proving the pre-eminence of the precursors of their own juristic schools over all others. The psychology of the then doctors of religion is best illustrated by the resentment shown by the *ʿulamā* belonging to the Shafeʿī school on the appointment of the Chief Qāzis of other juristic schools in addition to a Shafeʿī State Jurist by Sultan Al-Malik al-Zāhir Baibers. These theologians were indignant that in a country where only a Shafeʿī doctor of law held that office, dignitaries of equal rank should be appointed from amongst the followers of other juristic schools as well. When the rule of Baiber's progeny over Egypt came to an end a few years after this incident, it was construed by certain Shafeʿī *ʿulama* as a Divine punishment for the Baiber's action.[1]

1. *Tabaqāt-us-Shafeʿiyah*

Narrow-mindedness and rigidness were not limited to the legists alone, for the fixity of theological philosophy had restricted it, perhaps, to a far greater extent to canalised ideas. The followers of the four schools of orthodox Islam acknowledged each other's validity; they met, conversed and had cordial relations amongst them, but it was impossible to see a similar tolerance between the Ash'arites and Hanbalites. Whereas the legists debated simply about the correctness of their own interpretation, the disputation between the scholasticians was more often meant to prove that the other side had lapsed from faith. The credal fixity of the dialecticians, as distinct from theological rigidity, stimulated by a flair for logical disputation had made these polemical wranglings a popular intellectual pursuit. The grandees and the nobles, the learned and the laity all took a keen interest in these verbal engagements.

As already stated earlier, mysticism seems to have captured the heart and soul of a great majority. The sufistic thought had absorbed numerous un-Islamic and foreign ideas while most of the *sufis*, illiterate and profane, were spreading infidelity and indifference to the teachings of Islam.

A section of the philosophers was busy, on the other hand, in spreading its own agnostic ideas, often overtly, and at times covertly, completely disregarding the prophetic teachings. There were others too who wanted to reconcile religion with philosophy, for, they had assumed the superiority of reason over faith. Both these groups were, however, fossilised followers of Aristotle and Plato; they held the two in the highest esteem as fount of all wisdom, and their theories as inviolate immutable.

This was, then, the political, social, ethical, and intellectual atmosphere obtaining at the time in which Ibn Taimiyah was brought up and wherein he rose to give a call for all-round reform and regeneration of the Muslim world.

II

Early Life

Birth and Childhood of Ibn Taimiyah

Born on Monday, the 10th of Rabī-ul-Awwal 661 A.H., Ahmad Taqī ud-dīn Ibn Taimiyah came of a reputed family of theologians belonging to Harran near Edessa (Roha)[1] in northern Iraq.

His father, Shahab ud-dīn ʿAbdul Halīm Ibn Taimiyah (d. 682 A.H.), was the pulpiter of the great Ummayyad mosque and a professor of Traditions in *Darul Hadīth ʿAssakuriyah* of Damascus.[2] Likewise, his grandfather Abul Barkāt Majd ud-dīn Ibn Taimiyah (d. 652 A.H.) was a renowned teacher of Hanbalite school and a man of letters, whose *Muntaqi-ul-Akhbār* classifying all the Traditions serving as the source of legislation is still held as a work of great erudition.[3]

This was the time when the entire world of Islam was timorously trembling with fear under the terrible blows dealt with by the barbaric Tartar hordes, but the lands of Iraq and Jazirah were at the moment special targets of their horrid depredations. Ibn Taimiyah was seven years of age when the Tartars mounted an attack on Harran. Fearful of massacres, rapines, conflagrations and, above all, the indignities which

1. Known as Orfa, the town is now in Turkey
2. Ibn Kathīr, Vol. XIII, p. 303
3. Shaukānī later wrote a commentary on *Muntaqi-ul-Akhbār* under the title of *Nail-ul-Autār* in eight volumes.

were worse than death, the family of Ibn Taimiyah left Harran along with the terror-smitten multitude to seek asylum in some other Muslim country. There was no question of proceeding to Iraq which had already fallen to the Tartar arms. They had, therefore, to bend their steps to Damascus which was a comparatively safer place ruled by the powerful Memlūks of Egypt. Leaving behind their entire belongings, Ibn Taimiyah's family chose to take away with them only the valuable treasure of books they had, but, with no beasts of burden being available to pull the carts, they had themselves to perform that job. Confusion and disorder prevailed everywhere, while the fugitives, filled with grief and terror were always fearful of being overtaken by the Tartar cavalry. Once, when a Tartar column was near at hand, the wheels of the cart got stuck up. The members of Ibn Taimiyah's family fell prostrate on the ground and fervently beseeched God to save them from the impending calamity. At last, the cart moved on and the carvan got ahead safely on its way.[1]

In Damascus

The news of the arrival of this illustrious family soon spread in Damascus. The people, specially the educated, were aware of the scholarly achievements of Majd ud-dīn ibn Taimiyah and ʿAbdul Halīm ibn Taimiyah. The latter, Ibn Taimiyah's father, was invited to begin discourses on *Hadīth* in the Great Ummayyad mosque and the *Darul Hadīth ʿAssakuriyah* which were attended by a large number of students and scholars.

Prodigious Memory

Ibn Taimiyah's family was known for its strong retentive memory. His father and grandfather both had an eidetic memory but the prodigious treasure house of the mind endowed to Ibn Taimiyah surpassed even his forefathers. When he was still a child, the feats of his marvellous memory used to leave

1. *Al-Kawākib-ud-Durriyah*

the people lost in amazement. An eye-witness account of his amazing memory preserved in *Al-ᶜUqūd ud-Durriyah* runs as follows:

> "Once a scholar of Haleb who had come to Damascus heard of a prodigious child, Ahmad ibn Taimiyah, renowned for his marvellous retentive power. Coming to a tailor's shop near Ahmad's house he sat down there to wait for the child. After a short while, the tailor pointed out the boy sought by him. He summoned the boy and asked him to wipe off his tablet so that he could write on it. The boy handed over the clean tablet to the scholar who wrote 11 or 13 Traditions on it and then asked the boy to read them once carefully. Now, the scholar took back the tablet and asked the boy to repeat what he had read. The boy repeated them all without a single mistake. The scholar got the tablet wiped off again and wrote thereon a few transmitting chains of the Traditions. The boy went through these and again repeated the whole thing. Astonished at the feat of the boy's memory he remarked: 'If God wills him to live, he would be a genius without a peer in the whole world'."[1]

There are numerous examples of Ibn Taimiyah's amazing feats of memory which lend support to the veracity of this story. In fact, the intellectual marvels of strong retentive power possessed by the Traditionists and other doctors of religion, recorded by historians on the authority of unimpeachable witnesses, show that the story narrated about Ibn Taimiyah is not at all exaggerated.

Education of Ibn Taimiyah

Ibn Taimiyah was from his childhood an industrious student and, as his biographers say, he never took any interest in games and sports. Later on, too, when he had grown up, no diversion, fun or festivity could ever hold his attention. Nevertheless, his

1. *Abū Zahra*, p. 56 (cited from *Al-ᶜUqūd-ud-Durriyah*), p. 21

works bear witness to the fact that he was fully aware of the different sections of society of his time, their habits and customs, manners and morals and even entertainments and recreations. It seems that he had not only spent his time as a scholar buried in books but had also studiously pondered over the problems of life and contemporary society.

Ibn Taimiyah gleaned knowledge of all the secular and religious sciences of his time. He gave special attention to the Arabic literature and gained command over grammar and lexicology. He not only mastered the *Al-Kitāb* of Sibawaih, the greatest authority on grammar and syntax, but he pointed out its mistakes too.[1] His proficiency in this field proved immensely beneficial to him later on in the composition of his own works. He gained a thorough knowledge of the entire collection of prose and poetry available at the time. He also studied the history of pre-Islamic Arabia as well as that of the post-Islamic era. The wide knowledge thus gained by him gave him a breadth of vision not found amongst his contemporaries.

Ibn Taimiyah also learnt, besides these, calligraphy and mathematics from the teachers of these sciences.[2]

Turning to the religious sciences, he studiously learnt the *Shariᶜah* laws, Jurisprudence, *Hadīth* and the Qurʾān. He studied the Hanbali system of law from his own father. In *Hadīth*, he first learnt by heart, as was the custom in those days, Imām Humaidī's *al-Jamᶜo bain-us-Sahīhain* and then studied the science from several reputed teachers of *Hadīth* present at the time in Syria. Ibn ᶜAbdul Hādī relates that the number of Ibn Taimiyah's teachers in *Hadīth* exceeds two hundred.[3] Among these are included such eminent doctors of *Hādīth* as Ibn ᶜAbd ud-Dāyam al-Maqdīsī and several others of an equal rank and standing. Ibn Taimiyah thus went through the *Musnad Imām Ahmad* and *Sihāh Sitta* more than once to learn these from

1. *Al-Kawākib-ud-Durriyah*, p. 2
2. *Ibid*, p. 2
3. *Ibid.*, p. 2

different teachers.[1]

Ibn Taimiyah had a fancy for the exegesis of the Qur'ān. As he himself says, he had turned over the leaves of more than a hundred commentaries and glosses of the holy scripture.[2] He was endowed with a bent of mind wont to reflect and meditate upon the pith and meaning of the Qur'an. Ibn Taimiyah has himself explained the way he used to bring his mind to bear upon the study of the Qur'anic verses. Says he :

> "Sometimes I have gone through as many as hundred commentaries of a single verse of the Qur'ān. After I have dipped into these pages I have supplicated God to enlighten me about the true content and significance of the *āyah*. I pray to God thus on these occasions : 'Thou art the Exalted Teacher of Adam and Ibrāhīm. Favour me Thou with the essence of this *āyah*.' Often I betake to an abandoned mosque or wilderness and beseech God with my forehead on the ground : 'O Guide of Ibrāhīm ! Grant cognition to me.' "[3]

The Ash'arite school of dialectics was then predominant in Egypt and Syria. Sultan Salāh ud-dīn Ayyūbī was himself an Ash'arite who had committed to heart, according to the famous historian Maqrīzī, the writings of Qutb ud-dīn Abul Ma'ālī al-Ash'arī on scholastic theology. Salāh ud-dīn even got his sons to learn these by heart. With the patronage afforded to the Ash'arite school by the princes of Ayyūbid dynasty and later on by the Memlūk sultans of Egypt, the Ash'arite school had gained immense popularity in those countries.

Because of the unending polemical wranglings between the Hanbalites and the Ash'arite theologians, the former had come to be looked upon as fundamentalists and opponents of the more popular modernist Ash'arite school. The Ash'arite scholasticism, with its method of argumentation based upon syllogistic

1. *Al-Kwākib-ud-Durriyah*, p. 2
2. *Tafsir Surat-un-Nur*, p. 136
3. *Al-'Uqūd-ud-Durriyah*, p. 24

logic, appealed to reason and relied on the apparent meanings of the Qur'ānic text and Traditions. The Hanbalites, just the other way around, were neither adept in discursive reasoning nor in philosophical induction with the result that they were unable to justify their stand as dexterously as the Ash'arites. More often they left an impression of being un-intelligent people, inerudite and shallow, having only a smattering of knowledge of inductive reasoning. This would have perhaps been the feeling of a proud and sensitive man, that Ibn Taimiyah was, who resolved to learn all about dialectics and syllogistic forms, logic and philosophy. And he did learn all the ins and outs of these ciences with a fullness of knowledge that enabled him to argue powerfully against the Greek philosophers. He pointed out the limitations of the methods and concepts of these sciences so masterfully that after him no philosopher of note came forward to rebut his criticism.

In brief, Ibn Taimiyah interpreted the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, established the superiority of Islam over heresy, philosophical concepts and other faiths and contributed to a genuine revival of religion after a deep study and deliberation that was necessary for fighting the religious and intellectual waywardness of the time. Seeking to surpass his opponents, the Jews and the Christians, the philosophers and the Bātanites and the mystics and the dialecticians, he mastered the methodology employed by them to attack Islam. In fact, his learning, his erudition, his intellectual attainment and his mental grit always left his adversaries spell-bound. One of his bitterest rivals, Allāma Kamāl ud-dīn al-Zamalkānī, has paid a glowing tribute to Ibn Taimiyah's encyclopaedic knowledge in these words.

> "God had made knowledge of all the sciences as easy for Ibn Taimiyah as iron had been softened for (the prophet) David. Whenever he was asked any question, he answered in a way that the audience thought him to have spent his whole life in acquiring knowledge of that very branch of knowledge alone and acknowledged him as the greatest authority on the subject. Scholars subscribing to

different juristic schools attended his discourses and each one of them learnt something that he had not known earlier. It never happened that he debated any point and was put to shame. Whatever be the subject matter about which he spoke, whether religious or discursive, he surpassed all the authorities on that particular subject. In penmanship, too, he was equally elegant."[1]

The Gifted Teacher

Ibn Taimiyah was only twenty-two when his father died in 682 A.H. Within less than a year he was asked to take the place of his father. The very first address he del vered at that young age, in the presence of such learned doctors as the Chief Qāzi Bahā' ud-dīn ibn az-Zakī as-Shāfe'ī, Sheikh Tāj ud-dīn al-Fazārī, Zain ud-dīn ibn al-Munja Hanbali, was full of thoughts that breathe and words that burn. It was a speech so impressive and forceful, sparkling and majestic that the historian Ibn Kathīr lists it as an "astonishing event" in the annals for the year 683 A.H. "It was so admired by all", writes Ibn Kathīr, "that Sheikh Tāj ud-dīn al-Fazārī himself put down the speech in writing."[2]

In the year 692 A.H. Ibn Taimiyah set out for Haj with a Syrian caravan under the leadership of al-Bāstī.[3]

1. *Al-Kwākib-ud-Durriyah*, p. 5
2. Ibn Kathīr, Vol. XIII, p. 303
3. *Ibid.*, p. 313

III

Trials and Tribulations

Having carved out a prominent place for himself among the leading scholars of Syria, Ibn Taimiyah's fame was fast spreading as a popular lecturer when, in the year 698 A.H., for the first time, an unfortunate incident stirred up a tumult against him.

Some persons belonging to Hamah submitted a question to Ibn Taimiyah asking him to explain the nature and attributes of the Supreme Being in the light of certain Quranic verses and Traditions which spoke of these in finite signs and symbols. Ibn Taimiyah gave a detailed reply to the question[1]. He explained the view held by the companions of the Prophet and their successors, the religious doctors of yore and the dialecticians like Imām Abul Hasan Al-Ashᶜarī, Qāzī Abū Baqr Baqillānī, Imām ul-Harmayn and others that a belief in the essential attributes of God is the most important part of the Muslims' faith. Ibn Taimiyah proved from the writings of the earlier authorities that all of them acknowledged the attributes of God whom they regarded beyond all similitude and free from all limitations.

1. The reply of Ibn Taimiyah covering about 50 pages under the caption *'al-Aqeedatul Hamuyah-tul-Kubra'* is included in the collection entitled *'Majmᶜa-tar-Rasā'il al-Kubra'* published from Egypt in 1323 A.H. The charge levelled against him that he subscribed to anthropomorphic concept of God is absolutely baseless.

Avowal of the Divine attributes by them was neither meant to anthropomorphise Divine attributes nor they considered it necessary to divest Him of all the positive qualities in their craze to prove the eternity of His Being. While insisting that the nature of the Supreme Being cannot be adequately expressed in terms familiar to the finite human understanding they had acknowledged the Supreme Being as the Knowing (or Omniscient), the Powerful (or Almighty), the Willing, the Living, the Hearing, the Seeing and the Speaking. Similarly, the theological doctors of old recognised other attributes ascribed to God, without any interpretation either designed to avoid the similitudes or negating those qualities in a way that reduces His Being into sheer nothingness. Ibn Taimiyah maintained that the conception of the Life, Knowledge or Power did not attribute finite human form or personality to God for He is neither a substance circumscribed with limits not determined by measure; neither does He resemble bodies; neither is He a substance, nor do substances exist in Him; neither is He an accident nor do accidents exist in Him. He sits upon the throne, after the manner which He Himself has described, and in that same sense which He Himself means, which is a sitting far removed from any notion of contact, or resting upon, or local situation. He is above the throne, and above all things, even to the utmost ends of everything that has a being. He is distinct from the creatures by His attributes, neither is there anything besides Himself in His essense, nor is His essence in any other besides Him. Therefore, it is not correct to conceive the inconceivable Being on the pattern of any finite form or substance or to consider the limiting adjuncts of human expression as circumscribing Him with the limitations of finite forms, qualities or personifications.

Ibn Taimiyah went on further to explain that certain dialecticians, either too much impressed by the Greek philosophical concepts or animated by an excessive zeal to uphold the Unity of Godhead, interpreted the Divine attributes in a way that was directly opposed to what the Prophet had taught and was understood by the companions and later scholars. The negation of

Divine attributes, more often, ended up in reducing God Almighty to a nameless, formless, nothing. The interpretation of these dialecticians was, thus, far removed from the teachings of the precursors of faith, the earlier theologians and even their own mentors. Ibn Taimiyah severely taxed these misguided scholastics whom he called an ignoramus lot unaware of the true worth and merit of the prophetic teachings and blind followers of the Indo-Greek philosophical concepts. He concluded his reply with several examples of philosophers who were ultimately disillusioned by their vain pursuit and ended up with an expression of sorrowful disenchantment. Many of them, said Ibn Taimiyah, acknowledged the religious dogma before joining the great majority.

The reply by Ibn Taimiyah was a full-fledged treatise well documented with quotations from the Qurʾān and the *Hadith*, which restated the truth in a convincing manner, criticised severely the philosophers and dialecticians and sounded a new note in theological writings by its masterly blending of a spirited defence of religion with the elegance of style and expression. The way it was warmly received by the Hanbalites inflamed a feeling of bitter resentment among the dialecticians and ʿAshʿarites who held posts of influence and authority in the administration. Describing the events of 698 A.H., Ibn Kathīr writes that a group of theologians which opposed Ibn Taimiyah admanded that he should appear before the Hanafite Qāzī Sheikh Jalāl Ud-dīn to clarify certain points but Ibn Taimiyah refused to do so. His adversaries kicked up a tumult against him but normal conditions were ultimately restored owing to the firm handling of the situation by Amīr Saif Ud-dīn Jaghān.

The situation might have again taken an ugly turn, but the Tartar advance against Syria left no room for any acrimonious disputation among the educated circles. The occasion, however, afforded another opportunity to Ibn Taimiyah to rise as a spirited defender of the faith and a popular leader of

1. *Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. XIV, p. 4

the masses.

Tartar Attack on Damascus

Intelligence in regard to the projected attack on Syria by Ghazān,[1] the Tartar ruler of Iran and Iraq, had begun to pour in the beginning of 699 A.H. It was reported that the Tartar forces were planning to capture Damascus. With the impressions of terror still fresh in the minds of the Muslims, the population of border districts like Haleb and Hamah took to flight. The exodus was so great that a horse could be hired for transport from Hamah to Damascus for two hundred *dirhams*. However, the news that Al-Malik al-Nāsir Muhammad ibn Qalawoon had left Egypt with a powerful army to check the advance of the Tartar forces enabled the terror-stricken Syrians to heave a sigh of relief. Egyptian forces which entered Damascus on the 8th of Rabʿī-ul-Awwal, 699 A.H., were warmly received by the population of the city.

Defeat of Qalawoon

On the 27th of Rabʿī-ul-Awwal, 699 A H. the Egyptian and Tartar armies encountered each other in a bloody battle. The operations of war were conducted by both sides in equal vigour but the Sultan was vanquished and he immediately retreated to Egypt with his remainiug forces. Now Damascus lay open, undefended, before the triumphant armies of Ghazān. The entire nobility of the capital including the Shafeʿite and Mālakite Qāzīs, religious scholars, the administrators and the traders took to flight leaving only the commander of the capital citadel. All the communications leading to the city were cut off, prices increased manifold, public tranquillity was disturbed

1. Ghazān, also known as Mahmūd, was the great grand-son of Chenghiz Khan. He had embraced Islam in 694 A. H. owing to the persuasion of Amīr Tūzaun, but he could not have been expected to have reformed his manners and morals within the short period of five years. The Tartars were then as ferocious and given to rapine and plunder as before their conversion to Islam.

by the prisoners who broke open the gates of the gaol and loot and arson became order of the day. The danger of imminent attack by Ghazān added to the chaos and anarchy in the city which was incapable of putting up any resistance and hopeless of getting relief from any quarter.

Ibn Taimiyah meets Ghazān

Ibn Taimiyah and the remaining patricians of the city then decided that they should lead a delegation of the *'ulama* and other noblemen, which should meet Ghazān and sue for the peace of the city.

The representatives of the city accordingly met Ghazān at Nabak[1] on the 3rd of Rab'ī-ul-Thānī, 699 A.H. Sheikh Kamāl ud-dīn ibn al-Anjā, who accompanied Ibn Taimiyah in the delegation has left a memorable account of his meeting with Ghazān. He says:

> "I was with the Sheikh (Ibn Taimiyah) on this occasion. He set forth in his address to the King the Quranic verses and the Traditions of the Prophet enjoining fairness and just conduct. His voice gradually rising, he was drawing nearer to the king until his knees were about to touch those of Ghazān who was attentively listening to the Sheikh but did not appear to be displeased with him. He was straining his ears as if struck with awe. At last he asked 'Who is he? I have never seen a man like him—so brave and courageous; none has made a dent in my heart as he!' The Sheikh was then introduced to the King. The Sheikh said to the King: 'You claim to be a Muslim. I have been told that you have with you a Qāzī and an *Imām*, a Sheikh and a *muazzin*; yet you have deemed it proper to march upon the Muslims. Your forefathers were heathens, but they always abstained from breaking the promise once made by them. They redeemed the pledges they made but you violate the word of honour given by you. You trample

1. The place is mid-way between Damascus and Hims.

underfoot your solemn declarations in order to lay a hand on the servants of God !"[1]

Sheikh Kamāl ud-dīn adds that despite Ibn Taimiyah's remonstrance in a strong language, the King bade him good-bye with the highest marks of respect. He even set free, on Ibn Taimiyah's recommendation, a good number of the prisoners. Ibn Taimiyah often used to say: 'Only he fears who has a sickness in his heart.'

Chief Qāzī Abul ʿAbbās, who was also admitted to the imperial presence along with Ibn Taimiyah, has given some more details of this remarkable embassy. He says that when food was brought before them, Ibn Taimiyah refused to partake the meals on the ground that it had come out of the looted property of the Muslims. "At last", adds Abul ʿAbbās, "when the King asked the Sheikh to pray for him, he began by saying: 'O God ! Help Ghazān if he has taken up arms to defend Thy religion ; if not, then do whatever Thou desirest with him." The companions of Ibn Taimiyah trembled with fear lest they should all be executed because of the Sheikh's imprudence but they were amazed to see the King saying amen to his prayer. When Ibn Taimiyah returned to Damascus, he was escorted by 300 nobles and chiefs of the Ghazān's army.[2]

Although Ghazān had granted amnesty to Damascus, the irregular troops of the invader were spreading terror and desolation in the outlying areas and suburbs of the city. Ghazān had nominated Saif ud-dīn Qabjak as his deputy over Syria. His forces entered Damascus and demanded surrender of all arms, horses and wealth concealed by the citizens. In this hour of savage licence, when every passion was inflamed and every restraint was removed, the precepts of religion seldom influenced the behaviour of the newly converted Tartar savages. Several of the most honourable citizens were surprised and massacred ; a large number of innocent women and children were sold into

1. *Al-Kawākib ud-Durriyah*, p. 25
2. *Ibid.*, p. 25

captivity; libraries and charitable trusts were extirpated; and the malicious Tartar soldiers roamed throughout the city in quest of prey and riches. The commander of the fort, Arjawāsh however, refused, under the advice of Ibn Taimiyah, to open the gates of the citadel to the Tartar chief appointed by Ghazān.[1]

Ibn Taimiyah, alongwith a few other respectable citizens of Damascus, repaired again to seek audience with Ghazān but he was not allowed to see the King. In the meantime the Tartar forces laid siege to capture the fort. Ballistas were set up around the fort and the citizens were conscripted for forced labour. Ibn Kathīr writes that the city gave a deserted look as nobody dared to come out of his house except disguised as a Mongol for fear of being obliged to help the Tartar attack on the fort. "During a Friday service in the great Ummayyad Mosque", says Ibn Kathīr, "there were not enough worshippers to make up a single row."[2]

On the 19th of Jamad-ul-Ūla Ghazān left for Iraq, leaving sixty thousand troops under the command of his deputy. He declared his intention to return with a larger force in the ensuing autumn to complete the unfinished campaign of gaining control over Syria as well as Egypt.

After the King had departed, one of his chiefs, Amīr Būlāī, started to ransack the surrounding areas. Vast tracts of land, towns and cities were devastated, a large number of Muslim children were forcibly taken away from their parents to be sold as serfs while Būlāī himself extracted large sums of money from Damascenes through general extortion and immoderate fines. Ibn Taimiyah decided to meet Būlāī to alleviate the misfortune of his countrymen. He met Būlāī on the 8th of Rajab and was successful in liberating quite a good number of the captives,[3] both Muslims and non-Muslims.[4]

1. *Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. XIV, pp. 7/8
2. *Ibid.*, p 9
3. *Ibid.*, p. 11
4. *Abu Zahra*, p. 39

In the meantime the news of the Egyptian forces coming to the rescue of Syria was broken by the commander of the Damascus fort. No sooner was this announcement made, the Tartar hordes hurriedly retreated from the city leaving it again without any semblance of administration. Arjawāsh and a few other prominent citizens including Ibn Taimiyah decided to maintain law and order in the metropolis. Ibn Taimiyah was seen during this period keeping vigil by night and exhorting people to take up arms for their defence. These self-appointed guardians of the city also decided to root out the abuses that had flourished during the brief rule of the Tartars. The avarice of Saif ud-dīn Qubjūk had prevailed upon him to patronise the sale of wine which was a source of income to him. Ibn Taimiyah toured the city with his friends and students, destroyed every wine-cask, bowl and cup and punished every drunkard and ruffian in accordance with the law. The courageous action taken by Ibn Taimiyah was received with approbation and pleasure by all the law-abiding people of the city.[2]

Punitive Expedition to the Hills

The Christians, Bātinites and Ismā'ilites settled in the hilly tracts of Syria had afforded whole-hearted support to the Tartar invaders against the Muslims. They had surprised and attacked the retreating Muslim troops, killed many of them and looted their provisions. They were in fact a heretic people, without faith in any religion, who despised all authority and were used to a semi-independent existence in the difficult terrain out of the reach of arms of law.[3]

A punitive expedition was despatched under Jamāl ud-dīn Āqoosh al-Afram after peaceful conditions had been restored in Syria, to punish the recalcitrant hill dwellers of Jard and Kasrwān. Ibn Taimiyah accompanied this expedition with a

1. *Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. XIV, p. 12
2. *Ibid.*, p. 16
3. *Ibid.*, p. 23

large number of volunteers and the people belonging to Haurān. Ibn Taimiyah exhorted the tribesmen to renew their allegiance to Jamāl ud-dīn, follow the precepts of true faith and return the property despoiled by them earlier.[1]

The Second Tartar Invasion

For two years, beginning from Rajab, 700 A.H., uncertainty and instability prevailed in Syria. With the report of second Tartar invasion reaching Damascus, people began to abandon their hearths and homes. Ibn Taimiyah started urging people to eschew cowardice and defend their home and honour instead of deserting the capital. He prevailed upon the administration to put a ban on the people leaving the city without obtaining its prior permission. Hardly had the situation been stabilized when the news of advancing Tartar forces reaching a place known as Bīrah was broken. An announcement of *jihād*, the holy war, was made and the glad tidings of Sultan Ibn Qalawoon's departure from Egypt for the defence of Syria were announced. Of a sudden, a communication was received that the Sultan no longer wanted to come for a second encounter with the Tartars. It was natural that the people exasperated by earlier sufferings resolved to transfer their families and belongings to the more secure places in Egypt. Ibn Taimiyah, however, not only arrested the exodus by his powerful and passionate haranguing but also met the Egyptian Governor of Syria in his camp outside Damascus and persuaded him to oppose the progress of the Tartar army. The Governor and other prominent citizens and religious doctors requested Ibn Taimiyah to seek an audience with the Sultan and urge him not only to send the levies but conduct the operations of war himself. Ibn Taimiyah went to Egypt and made a spirited appeal to the Sultan for checking the advance of Tartar forces. He asked him not to be terrified by the multitude of his foe. "Even if Syria had not been a part of your dominions", said Ibn Taimiyah,

1. *Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. XIV, p. 12

"It was a duty incumbent on you to have come to its rescue in this hour of danger. The responsibility of its safety rests on your shoulders; but, if you care nothing for its welfare, tell us and we shall make our own arrangements. We shall select a monarch who would at least defend the land against its enemies." Ibn Taimiyah remained with the Sultan for eight days and at last persuaded him to lead his forces for the defence of Syria.

By the time Ibn Taimiyah returned to Damascus a large number of Damascenes had already left the city. Ibn Taimiyah's return with the news of Sultan's impending arrival emboldened the people to make preparations for facing the enemy but the Tartars turned back on this occasion.[1]

Encounter with the Tartar Army

News of the Tartar forces advancing towards Syria was again broken in Rajab, 702 A.H. Delay in the arrival of the Sultan from Egypt was causing panic among the people in Damascus, many of whom again left for safer places. After some time, two detachments of the select Turkish warriors reached Damascus by the end of Shᶜabān that year. Simultaneously, however, a stream of refugees from the northern districts began pouring into Damascus. A controversy was also raised, perhaps, by some overtimid theologians who raised the question whether Damacenes need fight the Tartars at all since the latter had embraced Islam ? The legists were asked to define their position in the light of the *Shariᶜah*, for, the Tartars could neither be called non-believers nor rebels of any Muslim government. Ibn Taimiyah put them in the category of *Khawārij*, i.e. the sect which had revolted against the authority of both the Caliphs ᶜAlī and Muᶜāwiyah and had promoted itself to the dignity of Caliphate, and pronounced the juristic opinion that it was perfectly lawful to fight such people.

The Sultan was still far away while the reports of Tartar forces drawing nearer to the capital were in everyone's mouth.

1. *Ibn Kathīr*, Vcl. XIV, p. 16

Ibn Taimiyah again went to urge the Sultan who was on his way to Damascus, to speed up his journey. Ibn Taimiyah extorted a solemn oath from the Sultan that he would live or die with the people whom God had entrusted to his care. Assuming the spirit of a hero, he communicated a similar enthusiasm to the troops. Ibn Taimiyah even swore to God that the Egyptians would be victorious this time. He quoted in his support the Quranic verse :

> "Whoso hath retaliated with the like of that which he was made to suffer and then hath been wronged, Allah will succour him."[1]

He felt so assured that if anybody asked him to say : "if it should please God Almighty" ; he replied, "Yes, if it should please God Almighty, definitely and unequivocally."[2]

The Muslim forces of Syria and Egypt were at last arrayed against the Tartar armies in the plain of Thaqhab on the 2nd of Ramadhān, 702 A.H. Ibn Taimiyah pronounced the legal opinion that the troops should break the fast on that day. He went to every detachment and the line to offer them something to break their fast and told them of the Tradition which said : "Tomorrow you shall have to face the enemy and you would be stronger if you do not keep fast."

Sultan al-Malik al-Nāsir Muhammad ibn Qalawoon and the Abbāside Caliph Abur Rabʿı Sulaimān were both present in the battlefield. The Sultan fought with indomitable courage and valour ; he chained the legs of his horse lest it should run away in the heat of action. After a bloody conflict, which continued till the evening and in which a large number of Turkish veterans and chiefs were killed the Egyptian forces dispersed and dismayed the Tartar arms. Taking advantage of the darkness, a large number of Tartar soldiers took shelter in the ravines and caves, but the Muslims kept vigil for the whole

1. Q. XXII : 60
2. *Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. XIV, p. 23

night and did not allow them to escape their revenge. Many Tartars who had survived the perils of the sword fell to the archers' arrows or were drowned in the Euphrates.

On Tuesday, the 5th of Ramadhān, the Sultan entered Damascus with the Caliph and his army generals to receive the warmest congratulations of his subjects.

Struggle against Innovations and Abuses

After the Tartar danger was removed, Ibn Taimiyah again occupied himself with teaching and preaching the purer spirit of religion. As stated earlier, the unhealthy influences of the Jewish and Christian cults had given rise to many heretical practices among the ignorant masses. A rock by the side of the river Qulūt in the vicinity of Damascus was held as an object of reverence by the local population where they regularly repaired to seek divine favour. Ibn Taimiyah got the rock cut to pieces under his supervision by masons and stone-cutters and thus he put an end to a heretical practice.[1]

Ibn Taimiyah always tried to prevent, by force if necessary, all accretions and innovations in religion; for, keeping the pristine purity of religion constituted the highest form of faith according to a pronouncement of the holy Prophet of Islam:

> "Whoever amongst you should see any act being committed against the dictates of the *Shari'ah*, he should put a stop to it by force; but if he does not find it possible, he should criticise and try to reform it; and if he does not find even that much possible, he should at least hate it, although this constitutes the lowest category of faith."

It was really the business of the administrators to see that irreligious practices did not spread among the Muslims but they had no time to devote their energy to this important task. The religious doctors, too, more often than not either did not, care or fought shy to oppose such accretions out of regard for the popular sentiments. Ibn Taimiyah had, therefore, taken upon

1. *Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. XIV, p. 34

himself the onerous responsibility of acting as a public censor of religion and morals. He had formed a society, along with his followers and students, to censor the notorious irreligion of the ignorant folk and guilty schismatics. This was a voluntary effort with no other aim except to seek the pleasure of God by making these people to observe the sacred law.

An old man who called himself Al-Mujāhid Ibrāhīm ibn al-Qattān and wore a long flamboyant quilt with long nails and hair was brought before Ibn Taimiyah in Rajab 704 A.H. on charge of being addicted to intoxicants and abusive language. He ordered his nails and hair to be trimmed and his quilt to be torn to pieces. The man was made to renounce drunkenness and revilement.[1] Another old man, Muhammad al-Khabbāz al-Balāsī, who claimed to be an interpreter of dreams and mysteries was forced by Ibn Taimiyah to give up his impious practices. However, as Ibn Kathīr reports, Ibn Taimiyah earned the displeasure of a section of population on account of these reformative activities.

Jihād against Heretics

Ibn Taimiyah had earlier accompanied al-Afram in his expedition against the heretical sects living in the hills in 699 A.H. In Zil-hijja 704 A.H. he again visited them with Zain ud-dīn ibn ʿAdnān and a large number of his friends and followers. Although his efforts to bring them back to the fold of Islam were partially successful and quite a good number of them repented from their sins, yet they remained, as a whole, indifferent to Islam. The separatist sects generally consisting of Batinites, Ismāʾilites, Hakīmites and Nusayrites had caused severe harm to the Muslims. They were the people who had invited the Crusaders and the Tartars to invade the Muslim countries, helped the invaders against Muslims, led expeditions of loot and plunder whenever they found the latter weak and defenceless and they still posed a danger to the security of the

1. *Ibn Kathir*, Vol. XIV, p. 33

surrounding areas. Ibn Taimiyah invited the attention of the Sultan towards the crimes committed by these people in a letter in which he wrote: "When the Tartar hordes had attacked Syria, these forsakers of true faith had misbehaved with the retreating Muslim forces. These very persons had been in league with the Christians of Cyprus and had helped them to capture a portion of Syria. They formed the vanguard of the Cyprian armies, trafficked in Muslim arms, horses and serfs and transferred a large number of them to Cyprus. For twenty days, they held regular bazars to sell the Muslim captives and munitions of war to the Cyprian Christians. They gleefully welcomed the Tartar invaders but when God bestowed victory to the Egyptian forces, they openly expressed their grief at the defeat of our enemies. These people had earlier conspired with Chenghīz Khān and Halākū and they were responsible for the sack of Baghdad, destruction of Haleb and Salehiya. There are, in fact, numerous other instances of perfidious and disorderly conduct to their discredit. The peace of the surrounding Muslim areas is continuously disturbed by them. They carry out nocturnal raids, ravage the Muslim habitations and commit grievous crimes against the Muslims. When Cyprians visit their lands they extend a red carpet treatment to them but no Muslim can travel safely in their country."[1]

Ibn Taimiyah headed an expedition against these schismatics for the third time which set out from Damascus on the 2nd of Muharram, 705 A. H. He was supported by a powerful army led by the governor of Syria. Inaccessible areas of Jurd inhabited by *Rawāfiz* and the hilly tracts of Tiyāmna were opened up according to a judicious plan by which the roving plunderers were completely subdued. The hilly tract had dark and impenetrable plantations which threatened every step of the invading troops with its secret snares and ambush. Ibn Taimiyah pronounced the legal opinion that the cutting down of these plantations was permissible under the *Sharī'ah* since

1. *Abū Zahra*, p. 45

similar action was taken by the Prophet in the case of Banī An-Nadhīr. "The presence of Sheikh-ul-Islam in this expedition," says Ibn Kathīr, "proved propitious. Both his erudite learning and courage provided strength to the Muslims and filled the hearts of the enemies with malice and grief."[1]

Contention of the Rafaiyah Mendicants

On 9th Jamād ul-Ūlā, 705 A.H., a group of extremist Rafāʿīyah mendicants called upon the governor of Syria and demanded that Ibn Taimiyah should be stopped from enforcing the rules of *Sharīʿah* on them. Ibn Taimiyah, on the other hand, insisted that every one would have to govern his conduct according to the principles laid down in the Scripture and the Traditions, and, whoever tried to transgress these rules, would be opposed by him. The Rafāʿīyahs also volunteered to enact certain black arts like walking on fire as a proof of their being on the righteous and divinely approved path. They claimed that their wonder-working was accepted as a mark of piety by the Tartars. Ibn Taimiyah refused their plea and remained firm on his demand with the result that the Rafāʿīyahs had to put off the iron rings worn by them. Later on Ibn Taimiyah wrote an exhaustive article delineating the history, beliefs and the practices of the Rafāʿīyah order.[2]

Opposition of Ibn Taimiyah

The way Ibn Taimiyah was trying to enforce the moral and religious principles of the *Sharīʿah* had earned him a vast following. A section of influential religious doctors, however, annoyed at Ibn Taimiyah's taking the law in his hand and jealous of his growing popularity, was looking for an opportunity to discredit him in the eyes of the administration and the people. Ibn Khathīr writes:

"A group of theologians was jealous of Sheikh Taqi

1. *Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. XIV, p. 35
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. XIV, p. 36

ud-din ibn Taimiyah because of his position in the court of the governor and also for his acting as a public censor who had taken upon himself the responsibility of enforcing what was lawful and preventing what was prohibited. They were envious of his growing popularity and of the love and respect accorded to him as well as of his learning and zeal for religion."[1]

Contradiction of the 'Unity of Being'

By this time, Ibn Taimiyah was again obliged to take part in certain credal disputations. Muhi ud-din ibn ʿArabī (d. 638 A.H.) was regarded as the most respected mentor and undisputed teacher of the mystic thought. Ibn Taimiyah openly rejected his teachings expounded in *Futūhāt-i-Mākkiyah* (The Meccan Revelations) and *Fusūs il-Hekam* (The Mosaic of Wisdom), which contained a rapturous discussion of the indwelling of God in the created beings and the identification of man with God. The pantheistic monism of Ibn ʿArabī attempted to square the existence of a transcendental God with a God indwelling in the world and all created, material objects which were to him nothing else than His manifestations.[2] The writings of Ibn Taimiyah show that he had carefully studied the works of Ibn ʿArabi and reached the conclusion that the pantheistic monism of Ibn ʿArabī could in no way be deemed compatible with the teachings of the Qurʾān and the *Sunnah*.[3] He was particularly critical of Tilmisānī and Ibn Sabʿaīn, the two disciples of Ibn ʿArabī, who had failed to make any distinction between the Creator and the created. The former emphasised the negation of Divine Attributes, but preached pantheistic ideas of the union of man with God, emanation of all things from the Divine essence and, finally, the worship of all created beings. Ibn Taimiyah pointed out how some of the misguided mystics had

1. *Ibn Kathir*, p. 37
2. *Ar-Radd al-Aqwam*, p. 11
3. *Al-Furqān*, pp. 147-48
4. *Ibid.*, p. 145

made their mystical creeds a cloak for liberation from moral restraints and a licence for practice of sensuality.[1]

The reigning monarch of Egypt and Syria, Al-Malik al-Nāsir Muhammad ibn Qalawoon had delegated all authority to Rukn ud-dīn Baibers al-Jāshangīr. The latter was a devoted disciple of Sheikh Nasar Al-Mambijī who held Ibn ʿArabī in the highest esteem as the greatest mystic of Islam. Ibn Taimiyah thus earned the displeasure of Sheikh al-Mambijı, who, as it was to be expected, misled the unphilosophic and moderately educated Turk, Baibers al-Jāshangīr, to harbour malice against Ibn Taimiyah.

Ibn Taimiyah in Egypt

Ibn Taimiyah was summoned to Egypt on the 5th of Ramadhān 705 A.H. His friends and disciples, naturally, felt worried at the summon; even the governor of Syria advised Ibn Taimiyah to wait until he got the whole affair straightened up through correspondence with the Sultan. But Ibn Taimiyah who had already decided to undertake the journey, set out for Egypt. On his way to the Capital Ibn Taimiyah delivered a sermon in the principal mosque of Gaza which was attended by a large audience.

Ibn Taimiyah Arrested and Released

Ibn Taimiyah reached Egypt on the 22nd of Ramadhān. On Friday, he was asked to attend a meeting of the theologians, jurists and the chiefs of the State held in the Fort after Friday prayers. Ibn Taimiyah stood up to address the gathering but he was asked to sit down. Then, certain persons raised objections about the dialectical issues which he had already repeatedly explained in Syria during his discourses as well as in his writings. Ibn Taimiyah again stood up to answer the charges[2] levelled

1. *Al-Radd al Aqwam,.,* pp. 52-142.
2. These related to the nature and attributes of God on which Ibn Taimiyah had penned several articles and dissertations and also explained them in the debates held for the purpose.

against him but he was once more heckled down with the remark that they had not gathered to listen to his sermons. Thereupon Ibn Taimiyah asked, "Who is the Judge in my case?" He was told that it was to be decided by Qāzī Ibn Mukhlūf Mālikī. Ibn Taimiyah raised the objection: "How could he? He is my rival and adversary." Qāzī Ibn Makhlūf Mālikī got enraged and promptly pronounced the decision that he should be imprisoned. Ibn Taimiyah was accordingly kept in custody for some time in a turret and then transferred, on the night of *ʿId*, to the famous prison of Jub (the Well) alongwith his two brothers, Sharaf ud-dīn ʿAbdullāh and Zain ud-dīn ʿAbdur Rahmān.[1] Ibn Taimiyah's sympathisers, particularly the governor of Egypt and a few other theologians and legists had been trying all the while to get him released from the gaol. After full one year, on the night of *ʿId* next year (706 A.H.), he was offered to be set free provided he renounced the creed held by him. The offer was made to him as many as six times, but he always turned down the proposals saying: "The prison is dearer to me than what I am asked to affirm."[2]

Sinners and Criminals Redeemed

Ibn Taimiyah found his fellow prisoners sunk into moral disease spending their time in frolics and amusements and recreations like chess and checkerboard, without the least concern for obligatory prayers or the rules of ethical conduct. He raised his voice against these abuses, recommended temperance and discipline and inculcated the sense of piety and prayer in the prisoners. Not long after his arrival in the prison, he was successful in changing its atmosphere. The prison was turned into a monastery resounding with prayers, ejaculations and remembrance of God. A number of prisoners became his devoted disciples who, on being released, would much rather not go

1. *Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. XIV, page 38. Ibn Taimiyah has also given a description of his imprisonment in a letter which has been published recently.
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. XIV, p. 42

back to their families but remain with him in the prison.[1]

After another four months an effort was made again to get him released from the jail. The Chief Qāzī Badr ud-dīn ibn Jamaʿah met him on the 14th of Safar, 707 A.H. but Ibn Taimiyah again refused his offer. On the 23rd of Rabʿī-ul Awwal Amīr Hosām ud-dīn Mahanā ibn ʿIsā, an Arab Chief of Syria, saw him in the prison and brought him out of it after putting him on oath. Amīr Hosām ud-dīn took him to the governor of Egypt on whose advice Ibn Taimiyah decided to remain in Egypt for some time more.

Moral Excellence

The episode of Ibn Taimiyah's arrest and release revealed his moral grit and courage. He did not bow down before the threats of tyranny, nor did he yield to the offers of worldly gains, position and riches. He rejected all offers of royal favours and privileges which he could have easily won by retracting from his stand.

But this incident also speaks of his another excellence—a nobility of character seldom to be witnessed even in those claiming the distinction of rank and blood. He forgave all those evilhearted persons who had tried to get him into trouble without giving a second thought to the whole affair. He announced that he had no grudge, no bitterness against anyone. In a letter he sent to Syria soon after his release, he says :

> "May God be pleased with you. You know that I have never wished a single Muslim to get into any trouble of any sort ; then, how can I desire that my friends (scholars and theologians) should come to grief on account of me? I have no complaint, nothing to grumble against anyone ; on the contrary, I have a greater love and respect for them all—for their learning and status as they verily deserve. If someone opposes another man, he is either a scholar and man of principle or an evilhearted wrong-doer and a

1. *Al-Kwākib ud-Durriyah*, p. 181

sinner. In the former case he deserves our thanks and a goodly return from God ; and, if he falls in the latter category, one needs to pray for his redemption as well as for me and all the believers. I do not want that anybody should be avenged for my sufferings or for levelling false allegations against me, for, I have already forgiven everyone of them. I desire well-being of every Muslim—the same as I desire for myself. All those persons who discredited me or deposed false evidence against me or caused trouble to me are not the least accountable so far as I am concerned ; no responsibility lies upon them on my score."[1]

Teaching and Preaching in Egypt

During his stay in Egypt, Ibn Taimiyah took up with a renewed zeal the task of explaining his view-point to the scholars and theologians. He delivered several lectures in different educational institutions, particularly in Madarsā Sālehiya in which he dwelt upon the intricate dialectical issues in the presence of select gatherings of scholars, jurists and theologians. He opposed the mystical traits showing influences of the Greco-Indian thought, exceeding the limits of Islamic spiritual dimension set by the earlier mystics or marking a break with the protecting mould of the *Shari'ah* ; for, he quite often praised the masters of spiritual path like Sheikh 'Abdul Qādir Jilānī and Sheikh 'Adī ibn Musāfir Amawī in his writings and discourses. However, Ibn Taimiyah's criticism of pantheistic monism was not taken kindly in a country which had a long tradition of the neo-Platonic thought of which the poet Ibn al-Fāridh (d. 632 A.H.) had built a stately rime. A famous mystic of Egypt, Sheikh Ibn 'Atā' Ullah Iskandarī,[2] brought up a case against Ibn Taimiyah in the royal court on behalf of the Egyptian mystics. A court of enquiry instituted under the royal edict heard Ibn Taimiyah's forceful exposition of his view-point and decided to

1. *Abū Zahra*, p. 62
2. The author of *Al-Hekam*, a famous treatise on mysticism.

dismiss the complaint against him. Soon after that another complaint was made against him. He was now to stand trial for the view held by him that no cry for help except to God, not even to the Prophet of Islam, was permissible under the *Sharī'ah*. The doctors of religion to whom the matter was referred could not again find fault with Ibn Taimiyah. The Chief Qāzī only remarked that Ibn Taimiyah's view savoured, if at all, some disrespect to the Prophet although it neither amounted to heresy nor sacrilege. The administration had, however, grown weary of the never-ending complaints against him and, therefore, he was asked either to return to Damascus or to go to Iskandaria (Alexandria), but in either case he was asked to comply with certain restrictions imposed on him. If none of these alternatives was acceptable to him, he was told, then he would have to return to the prison again. Ibn Taimiyah preferred the third alternative but on the insistence of his friends and disciples he agreed to return to Damascus. He set out for Syria on the 8th of Shawwāl but he was brought back the same day and sent to jail. The detention, on this occasion, was analogous to house arrest, for he was allowed the services of an attendant and anybody could come to see him. Shortly thereafter Ibn Taimiyah was set free on a unanimous request made by the theologians and jurists.

Ibn Taimiyah again in Trouble :

Suddenly there was political change in Egypt which made the matters worse for him. Nāsir ibn Qalawoon abdicated and went away to Kirk, leaving Baibers al-Jāshangīr, as the undisputed ruler of Egypt and Syria. Ibn Taimiyah had been respected by the outgoing Monarch since the days of his close association with him during the Tartar war. Now, considered an enemy of the new ruler, he was also despised by Sheikh Nasr al-Mambijī, the spiritual mentor of Baibers al-Jāshangīr and a zealous defender of the doctrine of pantheistic monism. A royal edict for the exile and internment of Ibn Taimiyah in Iskandaria was issued in the month of Safar, 709 A.H. Ibn Taimiyah, how-

ever, did not sit idle even in these unfavourable conditions and his forceful elucidation of the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* soon earned for him a respectable place in the literary circles of Iskandaria.[1] The city of Ibn Taimiyah's internment was a stronghold of the Sab'īniyah order of mystics. Pantheistic cult of the sect preached emancipation from the ritual of Islam; its diffusion among the masses had led thousands of reckless and profligate spirits to enter upon the path of error. Ibn Taimiyah launched a powerful movement against the Sab'īniyah order and within his short stay of eight months in Iskandaria, he was successful in winning back a large number of its adherents to the moral law of the *Sharī'ah*.[2]

Dawnfall of Baibers al-Jāshangir

As already predicted by Ibn Taimiyah, the rule of Baibers al-Jāshangīr came to an end within a year of his assuming the imperial purple. Nāsir ibn Qalawoon first established himself in Syria by gaining control over Damascus, without any resistance, on the 13th of Sh'ābān, 709 A.H. Then he advanced towards Egypt where too he found a ready support from the elite and the masses. Baibers al Jāshangir abdicated and Ibn Qalawoon entered Cairo on the day of *'Id* that year. Al-Jāshangir fled to Syria where he was captured and executed by the governor of Syria on the 7th of Zil Qa'ada, 709 A.H.

Baibers al-Jāshangīr was an able and popular prime minister but no sooner had he ascended the throne than his eminence and authority began to peter out. "He was virtuous, temperate, modest and dignified" writes the annalist of Egypt, al-Maqrizī, "but from the moment he assumed the title of Sultan and ascended the throne, his glory and eminence began to melt away and he was taken as a weak ruler. The people began to make bold and the grandees as well as his slaves became defiant.

1. *Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. XIV, p. 50
2. Letter of Sheikh Sharf ud-dīn ibn Taimiyah to the people of Damascus and *Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. XIV, p. 50.

Unsuccessful in achieving his aims, he soon came to grief; his rule came to an end and he breathed his last."[1]

Who knows that his unexpected downfall was not a punishment inflicted by Providence for the unjust persecution of a blessed soul!

Release of Ibn Taimiyah

Sheikh ᶜAlam ud-din al-Barzālī, a contemporary of Ibn Taimiyah, says that when Sultān Qalawoon entered Egypt on the day of ᶜ*Id*, the anxiety uppermost in his mind was to bring back Ibn Taimiyah. Accordingly, the royal summons to bring him back reached Iskandaria the next day and he departed from the city on the 8th of Shawwāl. A large crowed in Iskandaria had gathered to bid farewell to him.

The king and his courtiers came out of the royal chamber to receive Ibn Taimiyah. After warm greetings extended to Ibn Taimiyah by all, the king took him to the inner chamber where the two remained alone for some time.[2]

Ibn Taimiyah later told Qāzī Jamāl ud-dīn ibn al-Qalānisī that when he was alone with the Sultan, the latter solicited his consent for the execution of all those jurists who had sided with Al-Jāshangīr. The Sultan showed him the legal verdicts given by these persons in favour of Al-Jāshangīr and said that these very persons were responsible for his own sufferings. Ibn Taimiyah adds that as soon as he came to know of the Sultan's intention, he began praising those jurists and told the Sultan that if these jurists were put to sword there would be nobody to replace them. The Sultan, however, again said that these persons had left no stone unturned to put Ibn Taimiyah to the most grievous harm. To this, Ibn Taimiyah replied that he had already forgiven them. He had, therefore, no claim upon them. Ibn Taimiyah kept on urging the Sultan until he promised to pardon the offending jurists.[3]

1. *Khutat Misr*, Vol. II, p. 418
2. *Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. XIV, p. 54
3. *Ibid.*

Ibn Kathīr relates on the authority of Qāzī Ibn Makhlūf, one of the bitterest enemies of Ibn Taimiyah, that he had not seen a man more large-hearted than him. Ibn Makhlūf confessed to Ibn Kathīr that he had always tried to instigate and provoke the administration to take action against Ibn Taimiyah, but the latter, when his turn came, not only forgave his misdeeds but also pleaded his defence.

Ibn Taimiyah again turned to the pursuits of teaching and reformative endeavour. A number of his adversaries expressed regret for their past behaviour, who were all promptly acquitted of their previous enmity by Ibn Taimiyah, but a few still continued to harbour a grudge against him. However, as they found it difficult to say anything openly against Ibn Taimiyah, they started to malign him among the ignorant masses and instigated them to raise a tumult against him. Their efforts bore fruit and on the 4th of Rajab 711 A.H. a few persons, evil-minded and wicked in spirit, manhandled and caused bodily injuries to him. Soon a large crowd gathered to take revenge on his behalf, but Ibn Taimiyah firmly forbade them to take any action. "There are only three alternatives", said he, "and the first is that I have a claim upon them. This I forgo, and declare that they are released from every claim that I may have upon them. If you have a claim against them and you do not also want to listen to me, then do whatever you please. And, if God has that claim, He shall have His due whenever He likes."

On another occasion a theologian fulminated against him in a gathering but, on having second thoughts later on, apologised to him. Ibn Taimiyah immediately forgave him saying "I never take revenge."[1]

Ibn Taimiyah did not confine his activities only to the instruction of his disciples or propagation of the teachings of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. He also tendered advice to the Sultān and got some important reforms introduced in Egypt and Syria. A royal edict sent to Damascus in 712 A.H. prohibited

1. *Abū Zahra*, p. 74

appointments to public offices being made on monetary considerations for the practice encouraged dishonest persons to hold these posts for minting money out of them. Another order issued by the Sultān forbade unauthorised retaliatory action against a person charged with manslaughter. The culprits were ordered to be arrested and impeached in accordance with the law. Ibn Kathīrsays that both these orders were issued by the Sultan on the advice of Ibn Taimiyah.[1]

Ibn Taimiyah returns to Damascus

Reports of renewed Tartar efforts to invade Syria reached Egypt in Shawwāl, 712 A.H. The Sultān himself advanced to meet the threat; he left the capital on the 8th of Shawwāl and arrived at Damascus on the 23rd of that month. Ibn Taimiyah also accompanied the Sultan. In Damascus, he was given a rousing reception by the citizens. Ibn Taimiyah had come with the intention of participating in the holy war against the Tartars, but on reaching Damascus he came to know that the invading Tartar army had retired. He went to Jerusalem with the intention of visiting Bait-ul-Muqaddas. He returned to Damascus after completing the pilgrimage on the 1st of Zil Qaʿada.

Attention paid to Juristic Issues

Ibn Taimiyah again got himself busy, on his return to Damascus, in the intellectual and religious pursuits, but there was a difference this time in his literary engagements. Earlier he had paid more attention to the scholastical issues relating to the cult and creed, which were the subject of a lively deliberation between the Ashʿarites and Hanbalites, but now he devoted his thoughts to the juristic problems. It seems that Ibn Taimiyah felt that the dialectical problems did not require his attention any more for he had clearly expounded its contentious issues in his earlier speeches and writings.

1. *Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. XIV, p. 66

Ibn Taimiyah was a Hanbalite like his forefathers, and most of the legal opinions given by him conformed to that school, but he did not follow the Hanbalite school exclusively. Of a truth, no scholar of Ibn Taimiyah's compass of mind, having an insight into the teachings of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* as well as the objectives, principles and rules of their application evolved by the earlier juristic schools, could possibly remain a blind follower of any particular juristic school. In specific matters, therefore, he preferred the school which more appealed to reason or which he found upheld by a greater number of the Prophet's companions and their successors. But, in spite of his erudition and intelligence, he always praised the profound knowledge, creative thought, honesty and piety of the precursors of all the juristic schools, whom he regarded as scholars correctly basing their rules of interpretations on the principles of the Qur'ān, the *sunnah*, *ijmᶜā* and *qiyās*. He never liked those who sought to destory or discard what previous generations had built up, nor he favoured those who showed disrespect to the earlier *Imāms*.[1]

The Question of Three Talāqs

Just as Ibn Taimiyah often rejected the Hanbalite view, in a few cases he drew up his statement of legal position disagreeing with all the four principal juristic schools. In these cases too he claims to have inferred directly from the express laws of the Scripture and the Traditions. One such case in which he differed with all the other juristic schools related to the repudiation of one's wife by three sentences of divorce, all given at a time.

The question was whether a divorce thus pronounced thrice at a time, although offending the law as well as irregular and

1. Ibn Taimiyah wrote *Rafᶜal Malām ᶜAnil Aʸᶜimmatil ᶜĀlām* to show that the founders of all the four juristice schools were men of piety who endeavoured to expound the *Shariᶜah* in the light of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* according to their own lights.

sinful according to all juristic schools and the consensus of the Muslims, took legal effect or not? The issues this question raised were whether revocation of such a divorce was possible or not; whether the three sentences of divorce would be reckoned as one revocable pronouncement or taken as an irreversible separation; and whether the wife so divorced could return to her husband or not without *halālah* (i.e. until the divorced wife was married to another man, the marriage was consummated and then divorced by the second husband)? All the earlier jurists and Traditionists, such as Auzā'ī, Nakh'ee, Thaurī, Is'hāq ibn Rahūwaih, Abū Thaur, Bukhārī, as also a majority of the Prophet's companions and their descendants had held the view that such a pronouncement, however sinful and heterodox, would sufficiently amount to an implied divorce taking legal effect. This view found support from several Traditions of the Prophet in which he had held all the three sentences of such a divorce as separate pronouncements and ordered the wife to be irreversibly divorced.[1]

Ibn Taimiyah and some of his friends and disciples, on the contrary, held that the three sentences of divorce should be regarded as one revocable divorce. He formulated this view on the basis of the Qur'ān, the Traditions and analogy and gave sufficiently weighty reasons in support of his view-point.[2]

Divorce by Swearing

There was another form of divorce in which Ibn Taimiyah held a view different from all other jurists and which had had an important bearing upon the relationship between the then governments and the people.

1. *Fatāwah Ibn Taimiyah*, Vol. III, p. 38
2. Contrary to the views held by other jurists Ibn Taimiyah proved that the Traditions of the holy Prophet on which others based their legal opinion were not of unimpeachable veracity in accordance with accepted canons of criticism. For fuller discussion on the subject see *Zād-ul-Ma'ad* by Ibn Qayyim and *Ighāthatallahfān*.

A common form of divorce, in those days, was to asseverate one's veracity or will to do a thing under oath on the penalty of divorcing one's wife. Its common form was to say to one's wife: "I shall do (or not do) this, otherwise you will be divorced." During the governorship of Hajjāj ibn Yūsuf, the oath of fealty made to the ruler was also linked with it which stipulated that in the case of breaking that oath the separation from one's wife would also automatically take place.

In response to a request for a statement on the juristic position of such divorces, Ibn Taimiyah expressed the legal opinion that such a declaration constituted a simple oath affirming to do or not to do a thing; and where a swearer failed in its fulfilment, expiation was incumbent on him, but the failure did not take the legal effect of separation between him and his wife. Ibn Taimiyah cited in his support the legal opinions of certain earlier jurists,[1] but his view deviated from the consensus of juristic verdicts on the point. This, naturally, caused vexation among the theologians who tried to forbid Ibn Taimiyah from expressing legal opinions in such cases. "On Tuesday, the fifth of Rabʿī-ul-Awwal", writes Ibn Kathīr under the annals of 718 A. H., "the Chief Qāzī Shams ud-din ibn Muslim met Ibn Taimiyah and advised him not to express his legal opinions on cases pertaining to divorces by swearing which might be referred to him. The Sheikh accepted his advice and promised to act likewise in deference to the wishes of the Chief Qāzī and other jurists. Then, in the beginning of Jumāda-ul-Ūla, a royal edict was received from Cairo which prohibited Ibn Taimiyah from giving legal opinions in such cases. The royal mandate was read out in a gathering and Ibn Taimiyah promised to abide by it."[2] Thereafter, it seems, Ibn Taimiyah reconsidered the matter and reached the conclusion that the administration had no right to interfere in this matter, nor was it proper for him to desist from expressing what he believed to be right for fear of

1. *Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. XIV, p. 87
2. *Abū Zahra*, pp. 436-37

government. Accordingly, he again started giving legal opinions in these cases. On Tuesday, the 22nd of Rajab, 720 A. H., a council of theologians and jurists was convened by the governor of Syria to consider the complaint against Ibn Taimiyah. It was decided to detain him in the citadel where he was transferred the same day. He remained in this preventive detention for five months and eighteen days and was released, on the orders received directly from Cairo, on the 10th of Muharram, 721 A. H.[2]

The Last Imprisonment

For about five and a half years between 721 A. H. to 726 A. H., Ibn Taimiyah devoted himself again to the teaching in Madrasa Hanbalia and his own *madrasa* in Qassasin, pouring forth his encyclopaedic knowledge. He also revised some of his older works. His ready pen would have, perhaps, produced some more classical works but his intellectual brilliance and pre-eminent individuality which tended to overshadow his contemporaries was a constant cause of trouble for him.

Ibn Taimiyah had expressed a legal opinion, seventeen years back, that no journey to a shrine, even if it be to the grave of the Holy Prophet of Islam could be undertaken as an act of devotion under the *Shariʿah*. He had based his opinion on the Tradition which said: "Do not saddle a dormedary except for three mosques, the Masjid-i-Harām (Kaʿaba), my own Mosque (the Prophet's Mosque) and the Masjid-i-Aqsā (Bait-ul-Muqaddas[3])." Ibn Taimiyah had explained how the pilgrimage to shrines of saints opened the door to ascribing divine powers to the saints and performance of ceremonies which imply reliance on beings other than God. In his support he had cited several other Traditions of the Prophet saying: "The curse of God be on the Jews and Christians who have turned

1. *Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. XIV, p. 87
2. *Ibid.*, p. 97
3. In Jerusalem

the graves of their prophets into places of worship,"[1] or, "O Allah, do not make an idol of my grave that it may be worshipped."[2]

The enemies of Ibn Taimiyah unearthed this seventeen year old statement of legal opinion to discredit him among the ignorant folk. It was given wide publicity in order to injure the susceptibilities of the masses, on the one hand, who considered it an act of great merit to visit the Prophet's grave, and to enlist the support of the theologians, on the other, against a man at odds with their unanimous view. This did have the desired effect as the feelings of the masses were stirred up to an extent that the administration felt obliged to intervene in the matter. The order to put him again behind the bars was issued on the 7th of Sh'abān, 726 A. H. When the news was communicated to Ibn Taimiyah, he said, "I was looking forward to it. It has a lot of goodness and grace for me."

Ibn Taimiyah was taken to the Damascus citadel. A subsistence allowance was fixed for him and his brother Zain ud-dīn 'Abdur Rahmān ibn Taimiyah was allowed to remain with him.

Detention of Ibn Taimiyah was a victory achieved by his adversaries. His friends and disciples were manhandled and some of them were even ordered to be cast into prison. They were all released after a few days, but Hāfiz ibn Qaiyyim, one of the devoted disciples of Ibn Taimiyah, remained with his mentor in detention till his death.[3]

Protest by the Scholars

Imprisonment of Ibn Taimiyah was a source of satisfaction to his enemies, but it saddened the hearts of a large number of scholars and doctors of religion as well as the majority of the Muslims in Syria and other countries. Numerous appeals were made and petitions preferred to the Sultān urging him to release

1. *Bukhāri* and *Muslim*
2. *Musnad Imām Ahmad*
3. *Abū Zahra*, p. 84

the Sheikh. The petitions submitted to the Sultān from every part of the realm and from the far-flung lands of the Islamic world show the extent of popularity and respect Ibn Taimiyah enjoyed among the people One such petition sent by the scholars of Baghdad to the Sultān expressed deep concern and the sorrowful gloom overtaking the intellectual circles and the orthodox Muslims of eastern countries, particularly Iraq, and the gleeful mirth exhibited by the heretics and non-conformists over Ibn Taimiyah's internment.[1] A number of religious doctors even sent their own legal opinions in support of the stand taken by Ibn Taimiyah.

Ibn Taimiyah's Preoccupations in the Citadel

The internment of the Sheikh, however, provided him, after a long time, the much needed repose and rest which he fully utilised in prayers and literary endeavours. He completed, along with his brother Zain ud-dīn ʿAbdur Rahmān, eighty recitals of the Qurʾān during that short period.[2]

The greater part of Ibn Taimiyah's writings during the period of detention consisted of exegesis of the Qurʾān which shows that the time left by recitals of the holy Scripture was spent in pondering over the Quranic verses. He also wrote a few monographs explaining certain specific issues which were referred to him by the scholars. He was thus enabled to carry on his literary activities undisturbed during the initial period of his last detention, except, of course, the sermons which he used to deliver for the benefit of the people.

Further Restrictions

The writings of Ibn Taimiyah were taken out of the gaol and their copies sent to scholars in every part of the country. Among the treatises and monographs written by him during this period, one lengthy dissertation was indited on pilgrimage which

1. *Al Kawākibʾud-Durriyah.* p. 198 and *Al ʿUqūd ud-Durriyah* p. 350
2. *Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. XIV, p. 138

he wrote in reply to an article of a Mālikite Qāzī ʿAbdullāh Ibn al-Akhnāʾ. Ibn Taimiyah showed at length how ignorant and unlearned the Qāzī was.[1] Thereupon ʿAbdullah ibn al-Akhnāʾ lodged another complaint in the royal court against Ibn Taimiyah which resulted in the issue of another decree ordering that every book, paper and pen should be taken away from him.

The royal edict confiscated all the books and writing material possessed by Ibn Taimiyah on the 9th of Jamada-ul-Ukharā, 728 A.H. On the first of the following Rajab, even the manuscripts and loose sheets of paper were taken away from him and kept in the library of Judiciary.[2]

Writings by Charcoal

Ibn Taimiyah neither protested nor even showed any resentment over this attempt to shackle his pen. After the ink and pen were taken away, he used to write with charcoal on loose sheets of such paper as he could lay his hands on. Some of these writings were found later on and preserved for a long time. He seemed to have reconciled himself to his fate and accepted the inevitable without repining and regarded his tribulations as trials and sufferings of fighters in the way of God. Expressing the same feeling in a letter he wrote. "Thank God that we are now engaged in a fight in the way of God. The battle we are fighting here is not a bit lower in order than our previous warfare against Ghazān, the heretics of the hills and the propagators of pantheistic monism. This is undoubtedly a blessing of God on us, although most of the people are not aware of it"[3].

1. *See Al-Akhnāʾiyah*
2. The building now houses the office of *Al-Majmaʿa ul-Ilmi-ul-ʿArbi*. This was the place where Ibn Khallikān wrote his famous *Wafayāt al-ʿAyān* and lectures were delivered by Ibn Mālik who later wrote *Al-Fih*. The material confiscated from Ibn Taimiyah, under the Royal edict, comprised 60 books and 14 folios of his maniscript.
3. *Abū Zahra*

Serene Resignation .

His serene contentment and calm submission to the will of God bespeaks of the faith delivered unto the saints. "The grace and blessings of God", wrote Ibn Taimiyah in another letter, "lie in what God decides for His bondsmen. Verily, He is the strong, the Dominant, the Wise and the Knower. Man is put to harm only by his own sins, for, says God : 'Whatever of good befalleth thee (O man) it is from Allah and whatever of ill befalleth thee it is from thyself.'[1] Therefore, it is incumbent on man to be thankful to God and praise Him ever and anon, and seek forgiveness for his sins from the cradle to the grave. For benediction to God brings His grace and blessings, supplication for Divine forgiveness averts His wrath and punishment. Whatever God ordains for His bondsman, it is always the best for him. The Prophet of God is reported to have said[2] : 'If prosperity attends a believer, he is thankful (to Allah) ; and if adversity befalls him, he is patient and it is good for him."

But Ibn Taimiyah was also convinced that he was without reproach : the only fault he owned was that he did not yield obedience to the authorities in a religious matter in which he considered himself to be just and right. He acknowledged his intractability, if it could be so named ; but, far from being sorry for the shortcoming, he considered it the harvest of his conviction in the Unity of God. In yet another letter written by him from the jail he says : "Their greatest charge against me is that the orders given by a man were disregarded by me. But, if the order given by a human being, whether he be a master or king, contravenes the commandments of God and His Prophet, then that should never be obeyed. On the contrary, the entire Muslim community is agreed on the view that no obedience is permissible in anything opposed to an express mandate of God and the Prophet."

1. Q. IV : 79
2. *Muslim*, on the authority of Suhaib ibn Sinan

The Last Days

Zain ud-din ʿAbdur Rahmān relates that after completing eighty recitals of the Qurʾān, Ibn Taimiyah started it again with him. However, when he reached the closing verses of the *Sūrah al-Qamar*—Lo! the righteous will dwell among gardens and rivers firmly established in the favour of a Mighty King[1]—he expressed his desire to continue the recital further with ʿAbdullah ibn Muhīb and his brother ʿAbdullāh az-Zaraʿee. Both these brothers were pious and pure of heart, and their recital was very much liked by Ibn Taimiyah. But he had not completed this recital of the Qurʾān when the knell summoning him to heaven was sounded.

The Sheikh had been indisposed for a few days when the governor of Damascus called upon him. On his request to pardon him for the inconvenience caused on his account, Ibn Taimiyah replied: "I have already forgiven you and all those persons who have been hostile to me. They knew not that I was in the right. I bear no malice nor have I any grievance against the King for putting me in jail at the instance of the theologians. He did not do it of his own accord and is free from all responsibility in this regard. I have pardoned every man in this affair except those who are enemies of God and His Prophet."

Ibn Taimiyah was taken ill twenty-two days before his death. His health gradually dwindled till the journey's end drew near in the night of the twenty second of Zil-Qaʿada, 728 A.H., when he quit this world at the age of 67 years. "Everyone that is thereon will pass away; there remaineth but the Countenance of thy Lord of Might and Glory."[2]

The crier of the citadel mosque announced the death of Ibn Taimiyah from the minaret, which was repeated by the guards in the turrets and soon it spread in the city like wild fire. The gates of the fort were thrown open to allow wave after wave of teeming crowd coming to pay its last homage to the departed

1. Q. LIV: 54-55
2. Q. LV: 26-27

teacher. Many of them kissed, with tears brimming in their eyes, the forehead that frequently remained prostrated before the Lord.

The bier was brought to the Ummayyad Mosque for funeral service. The thronging crowd which was getting stronger every moment was so great that the army had to force its way into it for carrying the bier with great difficulty. In the vast multitude jostling and pushing to get near the bier many lost their shoes. At last the procession ended in Sūq-al-Khail where another funeral service was led by his younger brother Zain ud-dīn ʿAbdur Rahmān. After the service, Ibn Taimiyah was laid at rest in Maqbartis-Sūfiyah[1] by the side of his brother Sharaf ud-dīn ʿAbdullah. It is estimated that a train of 60,000 to 1,00,000 persons of which at least 15,000 were women joined the funeral procession.[2]

In several Islamic countries lying to the south and east of Syria funeral services were held in absentia for Ibn Taimiyah. Ibn Rajab, a chronicler who wrote *Tabqāt-ul-Hanābilah*, says that the funeral services were held in several nearer and far off lands like Yeman and China. "The funeral service of an expositor of the Qurʾān will now be held," was the announcement made after Friday prayers in a far off city according to the travellers returning from China.

1. In this burial ground where such luminaries as Ibn ʿAsākir, Ibn us-Salāh, Ibn al-Athīr, Abul Hajjāj Al-Mizzī, Hāfiz Imād ud-din Ibn Kathīr were buried, only the grave of Ibn Taimiyah now remains in an open space before the Hall of the University of Syria and the Hospital.
2. *Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. XIV, p. 136-39

IV

Character and Achievements

Intellectual Brilliance

Ibn Taimiyah occupied a pride of place among his contemporary scholars and doctors of religion, theologians and legists who had all to acknowledge, without any exception, his superlative merits in every branch of learning. This was not due to his fire of genius alone but also because of his marvellous retentive memory which was, indeed, a God-given gift granted to a few beneath the heavens. By Ibn Taimiyah's time, the religious sciences had been vastly developed and encyclopaedic literature had been accumulated on scores of its branches. No scholar could, without a prodigious memory, claim mastery over the whole of it, much less sit in judgement over the thoughts and findings of the savants in every field of knowledge. But the remarkable treasure house of Ibn Taimiyah's mind enabled him to have at his finger tips the whole of the then extant literature on exegesis, Traditions, jurisprudence, dogmatic theology, scholasticism, history, biography, lexicography and syntax. He could always utilize this store-house of knowledge in his thrilling career of intellectual and literary pursuits.

His contemporaries and successors both are agreed that he possessed a wonderful memory, nimble mind, quick grasp and a radiant flame of intellect. One of his classmates, ʿAlam ud-dīn al-Barzālī, says that "he enshrined in his memory whatever he heard, rarely anything faded from his mind and, intelligent as

he was, he had a wide knowledge."[1] Shams ud-dīn al-Zahabī, the famous historian and biographer has avouched that he has not seen "a man more adept than Ibn Taimiyah who could rehearse the Traditions so correctly (with the correct wordings and the narrative chains), recall these at the appropriate time and cite the correct references."[2] Everyone conversant with the science of Traditions knows how difficult it is to learn by heart the entire literature on Traditions. But, strange though it may seem, no contemporary scholar of Ibn Taimiyah, not even his bitterest critics, ever disputed the testimony of al-Zahabī who said: "It can truly be claimed that no Tradition would be acceptable if Ibn Taimiyah pleaded ignorance of it."[3] Kamāl ud-dīn ibn az-Zamalkānī disagreed with Ibn Taimiyah on many issues and had figured against him in several polemical disputations. Once he acknowledged that "no man of such prodigious memory has been born in the last four or five hundred years."[4] To quote al-Zahabī again, Ibn Taimiyah was "a flame of intellect" and "a marvel of sparkling intelligence and a sharp wit."[5]

Encyclopaedic Knowledge

Ibn Taimiyah had so completely assimilated all the knowledge of his time that even the talented doctors in different fields of learning were amazed to see his mastery in their own sciences. A number of eminent scholars have paid glowing tributes to Ibn Taimiyah. Taqī ud-dīn Ibn Daqīq ul-ʿId occupies a distinguished place among the teachers of Traditions. His impression, after Ibn Taimiyah met him in Egypt in 700 A.H. was: "I felt that he had all the sciences before his eyes; he called up whatever he liked and left whatever he wanted."[6]

1. *Ar-Radd ul-Wāfir*, p. 66
2. *Al-Qaul-il-Jalī*, p. 101
3. *Al-Kawākib ud-Durriyah*, p. 145
4. *Ibid* p. 145
5. *Ar-Radd-ul-Wāfir*, p. 29
6. *Ibid* p. 31

Kamāl ud-dīn ibn az-Zamalkānī was a renowned scholar in several sciences. Expressing his astonishment over Ibn Taimiyah's agility of mind he says, "When he is asked anything, his reply gives the impression that he has spent his whole life in acquiring the knowledge of that very science alone and there is none else who can equal him in that branch of learning."[1] Taqī ud-dīn ibn al-Subkī, one of Ibn Taimiyah's rivals who had written many books to confute Ibn Taimiyah's views on certain juristic issues, wrote in his letter to al-Zahabī: "I am fully aware that Ibn Taimiyah is an erudite scholar, his knowledge is profound and deep in all the religious and secular sciences; he is mature in thought and sparkling in intellect, and I also know that his scholarship is beyond all praise. I have always acknowledged these qualities of Ibn Taimiyah before my friends and associates."[2]

Ibn Taimiyah was not a student of history. However, his competence in this field too was acknowledged by a historian like Shams ud-dīn al-Zahabī in these words: "His knowledge of history is remarkably astonishing." Ibn Qayyim has left an account of Ibn Taimiyah's amazing proficiency in this field as well as sharpness of mind. He writes in *Zād ul-Maʿād* that once the Jews (of either Syria or Iraq) produced as scroll of crumbling paper with a writing in the old script which showed that the Prophet had exempted the Jews of Khaibar from the payment of *Jizyah* (poll-tax). The document had the signatures of ʿAlī, Saʿad ibn Maʿāz and a number of other companions of the Prophet as witnesses. Certain scholars, not so well-versed in history, accepted it as a genuine document and gave the decision that the Jews should be exempted from the payment of poll-tax. But when the document was shown to Ibn Taimiyah he at once declared it to be a fake document and gave as many as ten reasons for holding that opinion. Some of the reasons given by Ibn Taimiyah for declaring the document as spurious were that it had

1. *Ar-Radd ul-Wāfir* p. 30
2. *Tabqāt-i-Shāfeʿiyah*

the signature of Sa'ad ibn Ma'az but he had died before the battle of Khaibar; there could be no question of any exemption from the poll-tax because the Quranic verses imposing the tax were revealed in the year of Tabūk i.e. three years after the battle of Khaibar was fought. The exemption of the Jews from forced labour, a mention of which was made in the document, was absurd for the Prophet or his companions neither considered it lawful under the *Shari'āh* nor they ever subjected anybody to forced labour; and, lastly, no historian, Traditionist or legist had made a mention of the document in question in his writings."[1]

Another story of his nimble wit and facility of poetization has been told by Saleh Tāj ud-dīn. He says that once a Jew brought a question about fate in the form of eight verses. Ibn Taimiyah read the verses, pondered over the question for a few seconds and then started writing its reply. When he had completed the reply it was found that he had composed 184 verses in the same metre and rhyme in which the question had been indited. Saleh Tāj ud-dīn adds that Ibn Taimiyah's verses were so profound that a commentary on them would have filled two copious volumes.[2]

Ibn Taimiyah's great store of knowledge has been acclaimed by his contemporary and succeeding scholars with such complimentary remarks as "The Master Spirit of the Age," "The Crown of Scholars," "Last of the Enlightened scholars," and "A Sign among the Signs of God." Ibn Saiyid-in-Nās (d. 734 A.H.) says that 'his contemporaries did not see another man like him, nor did he himself witness his peer."[3] Similarly, Shams ud-dīn al-Zahabī testifies: "If I were asked to testify before the Ka'aba I will swear by God that neither I saw a scholar like him nor did he himself see a man of his stature."

Dauntless Courage

The Turk chiefs and military generals were amazed to see

1. *Zād ul-Ma'ād*, Vol. I, p. 336
2. *Al-Kawākib ad-Durriyah*, p. 154
3. *Ibid.*

the dauntless valour of Ibn Taimiyah which he had shown against the Mongols on the battle-field. "Seated on the horse-back," says Hāfiz Sirāj ud-dīn, "he assumed his station in the front line like a brave soldier and flew at the enemy ranks as if he had no fear."[1] The remarkable courage shown by him against the kings and rulers in raising the voice of truth was undoubtedly the outcome of an still deeper, spiritual and enduring element of his character. Many scholars before him had expounded the issues he touched upon, but the singular courage and fearlessness exhibited by him in explaining the true content of the Unity of Godhead and placing one's trust in Him alone as against the innovation of sūfistic ideas like pantheistic monism or union and absorption into the Absolute Being or other aberrations of the misguided sects, and the way he endured all adversities patiently and steadfastly show the fortitude and grit of his mind and character. Paying a glowing tribute to this brave, venturesome characteristic of Ibn Taimiyah, al-Zahabi writes: "None amongst his predecessors and successors dared to explain his view-point so forcefully as did Ibn Taimiyah and the result was that a large number of theologians of Egypt and Syria became his enemy. His adversaries left no stone unturned to humiliate and discredit him. They charged him with innovation, joined issues with him and wrote treatises to confute him, but he remained steadfast against all odds and difficulties. He resisted all temptations and remained firm on what he considered to be right and correct. The conclusions he had reached were not only the result of his own ponderings and wide knowledge of the Scripture and Traditions but also a product of his piety, fear of God and deference to the ordinances of the *Sharīᶜah*. On many an occasion he had to face the combined antipathy of opposing scholars, but he was always helped by God to emerge unhurt from the vindictive wrath of his opponents."[2]

1. *Al-Kwākib ud-Durriyah*, p. 161
2. *Ar-Radd-ul-Wāfir*, p. 67

The comprehensive knowledge and intellectual brilliance of Ibn Taimiyah had been acknowledged by his contemporaries, friends and foes both, but the secret of his greatness and immortal fame lay in his inquiring mind, coherent thought and ability to chart an untrodden course for himself. No scholar before him had dared to point out the mistakes of Sibawaih, the undisputed authority on grammar and syntax, as he did. Greek philosophy had so powerfully captured the minds of the scholars and doctors of religion that even its greatest critic, Imām Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī, had not succeeded in completely shaking off the influence of Greek metaphysics and ethics in his famous work *Ihyā' ul-'Uloom*.[1] But Ibn Taimiyah's writings do not show the slightest trace of compromise with the Greek philosophy and its way of thinking. In *Kitāb ur-Radd-i-'alal Mantaqiyin* his criticism of the logical syllogism smashes the entire structure of Greek philosophy from which it had been borrowed. In Traditions and jurisprudence too, the scholars never dared to discuss any issue except within the limits set by the earlier teachers, but Ibn Taimiyah had the courage to re-open many issues which had by then been taken as decided once for all. He fearlessly presented his findings with cogent reasoning couched in a literary style, which stirred the stagnant thought of his time. At last, he raised himself above the four orthodox juristic schools and began to base his legal opinions only on the Scripture, the Traditions of the Prophet and the practice of the companions. "For the last few years", says al-Zahabī, "he is not giving his legal opinions in accordance with any recognised juristic school, but stands by what he considers to be right. He has set forth a series of such reasons and proofs, as none else had done earlier, which uphold the correctness of following the precepts of the Prophet and the earliest followers of Islam."[2]

It is natural for man to err, and Ibn Taimiyah too was at

1. For a fuller discussion see *Falāsafatul Ikhlāq fil Islām wa Silātuhā bil Falsafatil Ighriqiāh* and *Tarīkh-i-Akhlāq* by Dr. Muhammad Yūsuf Mūsā.
2. *Ar-Radd-ul-Wāfir*, p. 17

fault in some of his 'unique' opinions; but there is not the least doubt about his sincerity. He never blindly followed any *Imām* nor gave up the opinion of the founder of any juristic school either on account of false pretence, inertia or sluggishness, vanity or expediency. He was always disposed to act with careful regard to what was right and enjoined by the Book of God and Traditions of the Prophet. The character of Ibn Taimiyah can best be summed up in the words of Ibn Hajar ᶜAsqalānī which is worth repeating here. He says that "Ibn Taimiyah was without doubt the Saint of saints. Even in matters in which he was censured, he did not form his opinion out of arrogance. He insisted on his opinion only when he was satisfied about its correctness. In all those numerous matters in which his opinion has been accepted as correct, one ought to avail oneself of his wisdom and raise his hands in prayer for the peace of his soul. One need not follow him where he is mistaken, but he cannot be reproached even in those matters. All the erudite scholars of his time have affirmed that he had attained that position of scholarship and learning which enables a man to formulate juristic opinions. Even Sheikh Jamāl uddīn az-Zamalkānī, who was his bitterest enemy always trying to put him to harm, has acknowledged the erudition of Ibn Taimiyah."[1]

Furtherance of the cause of true faith was all his business, from morn till eve. He had no other occupation, no vocation, which could divert his attention from the remembrance of God and service of his fellow beings—neither a trade to ply, nor dependants to engage his attention he ever had.

Ibn Taimiyah's engagement in literary pursuits and devotion to God so engaged his attention that he never thought of accepting the responsibilities of a married life. He busied himself in giving legal opinions and helping others to solve their problems since early morning until the time arrived for offering mid-day prayer. He spent the whole day in that manner and

1. *Ar-Radd-ul-Wāfir*, p. 78

taught the students until it was quite late in the night. In between these engagements, he would keep himself busy in recollection of God, in praising Him and in seeking His forgiveness.[1]

Acquisition of knowledge was the other errand in which Ibn Taimiyah continuously kept himself employed. "It seems", says Sirāj ud-dīn Abū Hafs al-Bazzār, "that study and edification had become his mood and mental aptitude, dwelling in him and pervading all his actions.[2]

Ibn Taimiyah's sincerity and honesty of purpose is apparent from the fact that on every occasion when his enemies caused him trouble and distress, he was generous enough to declare: "I acquit every Muslim accountable for the troubles caused to me." The way he forgave Qāzī Ibn Makhlūf and insisted on Sultan Qalawoon to pardon all those theologians and jurists who had earlier opposed him speaks volumes of his largeheartedness and nobility of disposition. Always scrupulously careful to adhere to that which was manifestly true and right even in thought, his differences of opinion with other doctors of religion were always because of disagreement on religious and intellectual issues and never owing to personal acrimony. And, indeed, it was only on account of his unimpeachable honesty of purpose and uprightness that he was enabled to bequeath, within the span of 67 years from birth to death, which was full of restlessness and mentally tiring activities, anxiety and anguish caused by his adversaries, and adverse fortune and untoward events brought by destiny, a store of encyclopaedic literature which was enough to gain recognition not for one but several erudite scholars.[3] He profoundly altered through his sincerity,

1. *Al-Kawākib ud-Durriyah*, p. 156
2. *Ibid*, p. 156
3. Full details of all the writings of Ibn Taimiyah, many of which have been lost, are not available now. However, the total number of his works which include treatises, monographs and books, some of which cover only

[Continued on next page

independence of mind and indefatigable efforts, not only the course of religious thought of his time but also left such indelible imprints and influences which are still pregnant for the future. He can thus rightly be claimed as the harbinger of a new era of intellectual and religious thought in Islam.

Literary Achievements

There are some distinguishing characteristics of Ibn Taimiyah's writings which make them sigularly different from those of his contemporary scholars. They can still hold our interest and are, in fact, again exerting a formative influence on the more thoughtful sections of the Muslim society.

The first impression that a reader gathers from his writings is that the author has reached the core of religion. His discussions tend to centre round the fundamental bases of the subject matter while his forceful, lucid and exhaustive treatment of the subject captivates the heart and mind of the reader. Almost all his compositions, whether full-fledged treatises or small articles, especially those which deal with a credal, dialectical or juristic question, throw light on some inmost aspect or essence of the *Sharī'ah*.

Another feature of his writings is that they reflect the ideas, conditions and problems of his day. One can easily find out from his essays the moral and intellectual conditions, social problems and religious and cultural life of the society of his time. These descriptions also speak of the likes and dislikes, views and feelings of Ibn Taimiyah in regard to the prevailing conditions for he never wrote as an unconcerned and indifferent narrator of the events.[1]

20 pages while others run into several volumes, is 621. Of these, the writings on exegesis number 102, on Traditions 41, Jurisprudence and discussion of juristic issues 166, dialectics and matters pertaining to creed 126, morals and mysticism 78, criticism of philosophy and logic 17, letters expounding theological issues 7 and on other miscellaneous subjects 84.

1. See, for instance, *Iqtidhā' Sirāt-ul-Mustaqīm Mukhālafata Ashāh ul-Jahīm*

His commentaries on the Quranic verses restate the abiding truths in terms of life and surrounding conditions, make a close study of the different sections of society, their manners and morals, customs and habits and point out the disfiguring innovations in form and thought resulting from the disregard of Divine guidance.[1] The intimate bearing of his writings on life of the then society has imparted them attraction and effectiveness which will hold attention of the people for all times to come.

Whatever subject Ibn Taimiyah takes up, he presents, in a few pages, all the connected material culling them from hundreds of volumes on different subjects. The comprehensive treatment of every issue on which he writes, whether pertaining to speculative sciences or creed and religion, is peculiar to Ibn Taimiyah. At times the matter collected by him in a single volume is so extensive that it takes a long and intensive study to assimilate it.[2] At the same time, however, the multitude of ideas and excess of details cloud the original theme and make it difficult for the reader to follow his thoughts. But this does not, in any way, decrease the usefulness of his works, each one of which is a compendium of all the then available information on that particular subject. But for these encyclopaedic works of Ibn Taimiyah a lot of precious thoughts, utterances and writings of the old would have been lost for ever.

Nevertheless, Ibn Taimiyah's writings lack concentration of treatment as he very often switches over to a related subject which unnecessarily prolongs the discussion. Anybody not acquainted with his writings, thus, finds it extremely difficult to assimilate his ideas as well as keep his eyes on the central theme of the essay. This is, undoubtedly, a natural defect found in the writings of those endowed with the breadth of interests and nimbleness along with impassioned eloquence, as was the case with Ibn Taimiyah. It seems that he was unable to keep him-

1. See the commentaries on *Sūrat-un-Nūr* and *Sūrat-ul-Ikhlās*.
2. For instance, see *Minhāj us-Sunnah* and *Al-Jawāb-ul-Sahīh li-man Baddala Dīn al-Masīh*.

self strictly confined to the narrow limits of any subject and the restless wanderings of his mind continued to recall everything connected with the matter in hand in quick succession. This also holds true of his lectures as one of his disciples, Hafiz Abū Hafs al-Bazzār, succinctly described in these words, "Whenever he started lecturing on any subject the Providence unveiled before his eyes the treasurehouse of knowledge, recondite truths and hidden meanings, precepts and principles enunciated by the masters of yore and all the similitudes and illustrations of the subject found in Arabic poetics, and it seemed that a headstream of knowledge was surging forth like a swift torrent."[1] The same was the case during debates wherein he usually raised too many issues which confounded his contenders, who found it difficult to answer them adequately. This was the reason why the scholars of Syria and Egypt more often fought shy of challenging him during academic discussions or polemical disputations. One of his contemporary scholars and a noted debater, Sheikh Safī ud-dīn al-Hindī, once remarked, "Ibn Taimiyah, you are like a breezy bird; whenever I try to catch hold of you at one point you swiftly move on to another."[2]

The writings of Ibn Taimiyah, like his speeches, are burdened with excessive details and digressions from the main topic but even these, being informative and brilliantly couched, are rewarding for painstaking students.

Lastly, Ibn Taimiyah's works also differ from other writings of his time on dialectical and juristic subjects. Deviating from the beaten tack of a graceless and severe style and legal wordage of writings on these subjects, Ibn Taimiyah's dress of thought is graced by literary allusions and quick wit, ease and lucidity of style and vigour and eloquence which possess an immediate appeal to the readers. When he writes of the precepts of the old masters and the seemliness of the course followed by them his vigour of thought imparts a life, a spirit

1. *Al-Kawākib ud-Durriyah*, p. 155
2. *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. II, p. 14

to his writings that vies with the liveliness and grace of a forceful oration. Ibn Taimiyah's biographers and contemporary writers have also made a mention of his silvery tongue which was matched by his literary flourish. Speaking of the force and flow of Ibn Taimiyah's elocution, Hāfiz Abū Hafs al-Bazzār says: "His oration had the force of the flood, the rising tide of the sea. When he spoke, it appeared that he was not here but somewhere else: his eyes half closed and the face radiant with a heavenly grace, his haranguing overawed his audience."[1]

Ibn Taimiyah's efforts to revive the true faith cover a vast field which can broadly be categorised into revival of faith in the Unity of God, eradication of pantheistic ideas, criticism of philosophy, syllogistic logic and dialectics to assert the superiority of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, extirpation of un-Islamic beliefs through refutation of Christianity and Shi'āism and, lastly, rejuvenation of Islamic thought and its related sciences.

1. *Al-Kawākib ud-Durriyah*, p. 155

V

Reformative Endeavours

Thoughts borrowed from un-Islamic sources, irreligious precepts and dogmas fostered by the Isma'ilite Caliphate of Egypt and the pantheistic doctrines diffused by the illiterate and misguided *sūfī* mystics had given birth to numerous heretical beliefs and customs in those days. The Muslim masses had begun to look up to their religious teachers of yore, saints and martyrs as intercessors with God in almost the same way as Ezra and Jesus Christ had been elevated to the pedestal of Divinity by the Jews and the Christians. The tombs of Muslim saints presented the same spectacle—the same rituals, devotional services and oblations—as were commonly performed in martyries and sanctorums of the other faiths. Muslims too invoked the aid of their saints rather than of God : repaired to their graves in large numbers to celebrate the anniversaries of their death, constructed palatial buildings on their tombs, performed ceremonies implying reliance on them and perambulated around their shrines like the House of God. Graphic descriptions of the perverted beliefs and practices popular in those days have been left by Ibn Taimiyah. Some of these are reproduced here to give an idea of the popularity and strength of conviction gained by the perversion of saint-worship.

Divinity of Saints

"Most of the people hold the saints in reverence no less

than God and follow the commands of the attendants at their tombs, as if they were the saints' apostles. Supplications are offered to the departed saints to get their difficulties solved while the attendants are presumed to have the authority of declaring what is lawful or not under the *Shariᶜah*. These people have, in fact, dismissed God from Divinty and Muhammad from prophethood. Not unoften people come to seek redress against the wrongs done to them by the kings or to have some of their private affairs set right by a saint. The attendant then goes inside the shrine and promptly returns to report that the petitioner's request has been transmitted to God through the saint, and the prophet as well as God have accordingly sent word to the king in his affair. Is this not idolatry and ascribing partners to God? Surely it is blasphemy or rather naked idolatry which would not be tolerated even by the Christians and polytheists, nor would they be duped by such tricks. The way these attendants avail themselves of the offerings and presents brought to the shrines answers the description thus given in the Qurᵓān:

> "O ye who believe! Lo! many of the (Jewish) rabbis and the (Christian) monks devour the wealth of mankind wantonly and debar (men) from the way of Allah."[1]

Tomb-Worship

"Many of these ignoramuses could be seen offering prayers facing the tombs or beseeching the saints to take pity on them and pardon their sins. Some have even their backs towards the Kaᶜaba while offering prayers facing these graves; and when they are asked to desist from it they declare that the Kaᶜāba is meant to serve as a *qibla* for the laity while the elect and pure in heart need pay divine honours to the saint alone. Of these persons, some are even known for their piety and devotion to prayer and have thousands of disciples. There are others too

1. *Ar-Raddo ᶜala-al-Bakrī*, p. 298 (Q. : ix : 34)

who take to a life of exacting self-mortification and direct their disciples desiring penitence to complete a probation of forty days' prayer and penance at the tomb of their spiritual mentors. They sit meditating over the graves like idolaters contemplating upon their deities. These persons claim to have an exalted state of feeling, inspiration and rapturous joy in these shrines which they never attain in the mosques although—

> 'This lamp is found in the house which Allah hath allowed to be exalted and (where) His name shall be remembered.'[1]

Irreverence to God

"The saint-worshippers do not feel any hesitation in committing grievous sins but they tremble with fear if they happen to see the dome of their saint's shrine while deviating from the path of virtue. There they bid each other to be careful of the departed soul resting in the mausoleum. The saint they fear, but not God who has created the heaven and the earth and causes the moon to expand and decrease. If someone points out the blasphemy of their beliefs they try to intimidate him with the wrath of their saint in the same way as Ibrāhīm was threatened by the idolaters.[2]

> "His people argued with him. He said: Dispute ye with me concerning Allah when He hath guided me? I fear not at all that which ye set up beside Him unless my Lord willeth aught. My Lord includeth all things in His knowledge. Will ye not then remember?
>
> "How should I fear that which ye set up beside Him, when ye fear not to set up beside Allah that for which He hath revealed unto you no warrant? Which of the two factions hath more right to safety? (Answer me that) if ye have knowledge.
>
> "Those who believe and obscure not their belief by

1. *Ar-Raddᶜalal-Bakrī*, p. 295 (Q. xxiv : 36)
2. *Ibid.*, p. 298

wrong-doing, theirs is safety ; and they are rightly guided."[1]

Derision of God

The description of saint-worshippers' sacrilegious behaviour given by Ibn Taimiyah goes on to say that "they poke fun at the Unity of God and sneer at the prayers offered to Him. They look with scorn upon *Haj* and the *Hajees* and believe that the visit to the shrines of the saints is more estimable than the performance of *Haj*. This is what the Shi'āhs believe and many amongst the Sunnīs also. Some are even insolent enough to trifle with the mosques and the prayers offered therein, for they believe that the invocation of blessings by their *sheikhs* carries greater merit than the prayer offered to God. A sect amongst the Shi'āhs claiming to be the follower of Yūnus Qaisī not only has faith in such blasphemous doctrines but even expresses it thus in the verses quoted here

"Hark, and let us lay in ruins :
The mosque to open a wine shop ;
The pulpit, we must dismantle,
To fashion it into a lute and fiddle ;
From the leaves of Qur'ān, we make a flute,
And of the Qāzī's beard, the guitar's string."[2]

Shameful Impudence

"They are so brazenly shameless that they assert on oath what they know to be manifestly untrue but would dare not to swear by their saints what they know to be correct. Their dictum runs, 'We need no sustenance which is not from our *sheikh*' ; when they slay a goat they say, 'In the name of my Lord and Master' ; some of them claim that their *sheikh* is superior to prophets of God ; while others hold their spiritual mentors to be partakers of Divinity as the Christians think of Jesus Christ. There are still others who utter the name of their saints with the highest marks of respect; claim that their *sheikhs* have

1. Q. VI : 80-82
2. *Ar-Radd'alal Bakri*, p. 251

attained union with God; compose verses attributing Divine powers to them; while these *sheikhs* pretend that Moses had conversed with them when he fell in swoon or that their call makes the heavens move; and it is their fright which makes the worlds tremble and oceans restless."[1]

Divinity of the Saints and Prophets

"There are also those poor, misguided and unlettered folk who believe that the prophets are the creators and restorers of all things, the operators of the heavens and earth and it is they who solve all the difficulties of a man. This is obviously not the faith of Muslims but what Christians believe about Jesus Christ. But even the Christians regard only Christ to be the Divine word breathed from all eternity, for they do not hold such beliefs about other prophets like Ibrāhīm and Moses although they grope in blind and naked ignorance."[2]

"Some others rest in confidence that the inhabitants of every city or town get sustenance on account of their local saint who protects them from all the evils and enemies. The saint enjoying their trust is called the guardian spirit of the town as, for instance, Saiyida Nafīsah[3] is known as the guardian spirit of Cairo and Egypt. Similarly there are other tutelary spirits of different cities who are supposed to ward off evil from them."[4]

"So credulous and superstitious they are", says Ibn Taimiyah, "that when the enemy advanced against Damascus, they gathered round the tombs of their saints whom they expected to beat off the danger. One of their poets says:

O who fear the Mongol rancor,
Come and be safe under Abū ʿAmar.

1. *Ar-Raddoʿalal-Bakrī*, p. 251
2. *Ibid.*, p. 328
3. Saiyida Nafisah (d. 208 A. H.) was the great granddaughter of Hasan, son of ʿAli, the fourth Caliph. Known for her piety and learning, her disciples included such luminaries as Imām Muhammad ibn Idris ash-Shafeʿī. Her grave is reported to be in Cairo.
4. *Ar-Raddoʿalal Akhnāʾī*, pp. 82-83

"Another poet calls out:
Abū ʿAmar's tomb is the fender
you need,
That can keep off every trouble,
indeed."[1]

Shrines and Martyries

The natural outcome of the growing popularity of saint-worship was that every shrine or tomb of a person reckoned to have died in the halo of sanctity became an object of general admiration and reverence; decreasing, as if in a balance, the importance of the mosques. Shrines of saints, quite a number of which were fake, sprang up in every part of the Muslim world which were lavishly provided with rich endowments by the rulers of the lands for their maintenance. Palatial mausoleums with gold plated domes were constructed and a whole army of attendants, ushers and menials soon gathered round them. Fairs and festivals came to be organised at regular intervals which were attended by pilgrims from far off places. At times these pilgrimages to the shrine of saints were taken more seriously than even the *Haj* pilgrimage. These shrines had thus become the objects of devout reverence and centres of religious observances during the seventh and eighth centuries after Hijrah, far exceeding in importance than the mosques and threatening to replace even the House of God. The descriptions of this outrageous multitheistic cult in Islam left by Ibn Taimiyah clearly show how deep-rooted and wide-spread the abuse had become in his days. One of the reasons for its gaining wide popularity amongst the illiterate masses was the encouragement it received from the Fatimide, or, more appropriately the Bātinite empire of Egypt which held an undisputed sway over the lands extending from the far west to Egypt and Syria for 266 years.[2] The Shiʿahs have always had a higher

1. *Ar-Raddoʿalal Bakrī*, pp. 377-78
2. For details see *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, Vol. I, pp. 256-61

regard for the tombs of their *Imāms* in comparison to the mosques, and for the shrines in Najaf, Karbala and Meshhad a greater respect than even the two Houses of God in Mecca and Madina. Although the Ismaʿīlite Caliphate had completed its days before Ibn Taimiyah was born, but its intellectual and cultural influences still lingered on as did large habitations of Shiʿahs and Ismaʿīlites in Egypt and Syria. Their corrupting influences had combined with the preverted teachings of the misguided *sūfī* mystics to raise the shrines of the saints in popular esteem and turn them into centres of blasphemous practices. A few more passages by Ibn Taimiyah describing the then prevalent devotional observances at the tombs of the saints would bear repetition here.

Pilgrimage to the Tombs

"There are some persons who perform pilgrimage to these tombs. A few of them have even written treatises expounding the rituals to be performed by the pilgrims. A Shiʿah doctor, Abū ʿAbdullāh Muhammad ibn Noamān known by the name of Bil-Mufīd, has written a book entitled *Manāsik Hajj-ul-Mashāhid* in which he attributes certain sayings to the members of the prophet's household upholding saint-worship, although the spurious quotations given by him are manifestly absurd and meaningless."[1]

"The pilgrimages to the shrines are often given preference while there are people who labour under the misconception that two or three pilgrimages to the shrines of certain venerable saints are equal in merit to *Haj* pilgrimage. There are others who hold the tomb of their *sheikhs* to be another plain of Arafāt; they pay a visit to them during the days of *Haj* and remain there exactly for the same period as one is required to camp in Arafāt during the *Haj*. This practice is prevalent in the East as well as in the West. Some of these misguided persons hold the pilgrimage to their saints' shrines higher in estimation than

1. *Ar-Raddoʿalal-Bakrī*, p. 295

the *Haj* itself. Once the disciple of a saint offered to exchange the seven *Hajs* performed by him for a single visit to his saint's shrine paid by another man. The latter enquired about it from his *Sheikh* who told him that if he had agreed to the transaction he would have suffered a great loss. One can often hear these people making the assertion that perambulations seven times round the grave of a saint are equal in merit to one *Haj*."[1]

Scant Regard paid to the Mosques

"Without bestowing any care on the mosques which give a dull and deserted look, shrines are adorned with beautiful carvings and decorated by splash of colour and artistic designs. The mosques meant for offering obligatory prayers five times a day are left to the mercy of the poor who are often unable to provide even a carpet and a lamp for them. But, compared to these mosques, looking like neglected inns, the shrines are deco rated with beautiful curtains, adorned with gold and silver ornamentations and provided with marble floors. Gifts and oblations continue to be offered at these shrines all round the year. Does all this not mean an open disrespect of God, His signs and His Apostle, and associating partners to Him? But why does this happen? This demonstrates the common faith of these people that the supplications made in a shrine or calling out one's needs in the name of the saints are more efficacious than the prayers offered to God in the mosques. The natural outcome of such a belief is that the shrines are given preference over thc mosques which were to be the houses meant for sending up all supplications and invocations and entreaties and beseechments. If there are endowments for the upkeep of both a mosque and a shrine, the trust for the latter would invariably be lavishly provided with funds in comparison to that of the mosque. They follow in the footsteps of the pagans of Arabia

1. *Ar-Raddoᶜalal-Bakrī*, p. 296

who have been described thus by the Qur'ān :

> "They assign unto Allah, of the crops and cattle which He created, a portion, and they say : 'This is Allah's,—in their make-believe—'and this is for (His) partners in regard to us.' Thus that which (they assign) unto His partners in them reacheth not Allah and that which (they assign) unto Allah goeth to their (so called) partners. Evil is their ordinance."[1]

Despite the existence of powerful Muslim kingdoms and celebrated centres of Islamic learning and the presence of a large number of theologians, legists and other doctors of religion, the Muslim world had yielded, during the seventh and eighth centuries of the Islamic era, to a blind allegiance to the saints and *walīs*, omens and auguries, sacred shrines and richly ornamented tombs. Not to speak of the populace, even the learned and the erudite scholars seem to have been unresolved about the common beliefs and practices. The writings of Ibn Taimiyah's contemporaries show that they had failed to distinguish clearly the essential elements of Islam—the unity of God and the "pure faith" as laid down by the Qur'ān and the precepts and practices of the Prophet, from the current accretions and contaminations. Some of his contemporary doctors of religion had even joined their faith to these popular but lamentable departures from the first principles of Islam. This is amply borne out by two copious volumes written by Ibn Taimiyah to confute Sheikh ʿAlī Ibn Yʿaqūb al-Bakrī and Qazi Taqiud-din al-Akhnāī'.

Reformative Endeavours

The banner of reform raised by Ibn Taimiyah, undeterred by the bitter opposition of the misguided masses, posed a threat to the very foundations of unwarranted luxury, idolatry and superstitions of the age. The masses repaired to the tombs of

1. *Ar-Raddoʿalal-Bakrī*, p. 250 (Q vi : 136)

the saints, offered presents and oblations and indulged in practices contrary to the worship of the one and only God. They believed that their prayers would be really answered if made in the name of a saint. Ibn Taimiyah demonstrated by his writings that no prayer or invocation to anyone besides God was allowed by Islam; for, that amounts to ascribing partners to God, and was an un-Islamic practice borrowed by the illiterate laity from their non-Muslim neighbours. "The teachings of the Prophet of Islam leave no doubt," wrote Ibn Taimiyah in *ar-Raddoʿalal Bakrī*, "that he never permitted his followers to supplicate to any departed soul, whether a prophet or a saint either by way of appeal or intercession. Similarly it is not lawful to prostrate before any being, living or dead, or to pay homage to anybody in a way prescribed for divine service. We all know that the Prophet has prohibited all these acts which are, in fact, different forms of *shirk* or ascribing plurality to God, and hence strictly prohibited by God and His Apostle. If the theologians of bygone days did not declare such ignoramuses as outright apostates it was because people were unlettered and ignorant of the teachings of the Prophet. They considered it prudent to wait till the precepts of the Prophet and ordinances of the true faith were made known to all."[1]

At another place in the same book he writes that "imploring the dead, whether to prefer a petition or to make an appeal for redress is something foreign to the *Sharīʿah* of Islam. This is also a kind of idolatry. Sometimes the devil appears before the supplicant in the guise of a saint or in some other form as it sometimes happens with the idolaters. Ibn ʿAbbās has truly said that the idolatry began with the worship of tombs."[2]

"All the earlier precursors of Islam are agreed," says Ibn Taimiyah, "that making a request to some one dead or absent, whether a prophet or not is prohibited. God and His apostle have not allowed such invocations; neither the companions and

1. *Ar-Raddoʿalal Bakrī*, p. 377
2. *Ibid.*, p. 56

their successors nor the earlier jurists have approved of them. The religious canon which has been preserved in its prestine purity and handed down to us intact bears a testimony to the fact that no matter how distressing or how unfavourable the circumstances were during the initial period of Islam, nobody ever appealed to any prophet or saint for help nor sought their protection as the misguided people are prone to do now-a-days. There is not a single instance of any companion calling out the Prophet after his demise or any other apostle of God or visiting his tomb for seeking his help. The companions of the Prophet were often engaged by the enemy in bloody conflicts, sometimes they were dispersed and dismayed by the furious onslaught of the invading foe or were plunged in difficulties but none of them ever called out to a prophet or saint or any other created being nor one of them ever went to the Prophet's tomb to offer prayers. Imām Mālik and certain other doctors of faith even abhor praying for oneself near the tomb of the Prophet. They have clearly stated that this is an innovation of later ages without any precedent of the Prophet's companions."[1]

In *at-Tawassul wal-wasīlah*, the renowned monograph on the subject of intercession, Ibn Taimiyah says, "Beseeching the angels for help or calling upon a prophet in his absence or after his death or asking their statues or idols to intercede on one's behalf is a newly grown cult which God neither authorised nor commended to a prophet nor yet sent a scripture to uphold it."[2]

Prayer for God Alone

Expounding the reason for prohibition of prayers and supplications addressed to a being other than God, he says: "Although God has told us that the angels seek forgiveness for the dwellers on earth, He has forbidden us to pray unto them. Similarly, the prophets and saints remain alive in their graves

1. *Ar-Raddo'alal-Bakrī*, p. 232
2. *Qai'dah*, p. 15

and, as certain other Traditions tell us, they invoke Divine blessings upon us, but it is not lawful for us to supplicate to them. For it points the way to associating partners with God, the past generations reputed for true faith and piety never prayed to anyone besides God. On the contrary, asking anything from a living being does not smack of *shirk*. The supplication made by an angel, prophet or saint for the living beings is an act imprinted upon his soul and does not stand in the need of our requesting him to do so. There is no harm in requesting a living soul for something but after his death it is simply not capable of acceding to any request."[1]

Kinds of Saint-worship

At another place Ibn Taimiyah defines the kinds of *shirk* involved in imploring the departed prophets and saints. He says: "One of its forms is that some one makes a request to the dead soul to fulfil his needs or bestow health on himself, his household members or his cattle or desires vengeance for his foe, or else asks for something which cannot be granted by anyone except God. All these amount to ascribing partners to God and the person imploring the dead in this manner should be required to express penitence and if he fails to do so, he should be slain."

"Now, if this man takes the plea," continues Ibn Taimiyah, "that he calls for the help of the saint or prophet because they are nearer to God and that they can intercede for him with God as the elite and grandees do with the kings, then his action resembles that of polytheists and Christians. They also look up to their priests and clergymen merely as intercessors with God. But God has already informed us of the plea taken by the polytheists who say, "We only serve them that they may bring us near God."

"And this is what God says about them :—

'Or chose they intercessors other than Allah ? Say: What ! Even though they have power over nothing and have

1. *Qaʾdah*, p. 132

no intelligence?

'Say: Unto Allah belongeth all intercession. His is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. And afterward unto Him ye will be brought back.[1]

'Ye have not, beside Him, a protecting friend or mediator, will ye not then remember?[2]

'Who is he that intercedeth with Him save by His leave?[3]

"Sometimes the deceased saint is not asked to grant any favour but he is requested to pray on one's behalf as people sometimes do for others, or, as the Prophet of Islam invoked Divine blessings for his companions during his life-time. But one ought to know that the *Sharīᶜah* allows only those who are alive to be requested for pronouncing benediction on their fellow beings. Thus, asking those who are no more alive to pray for us would be exceeding the limit set by the religion. No companion of the Prophet nor his successor ever did so, nor has any *Imām* allowed it. There is also no Tradition to support it. On the contrary, we find that when a severe famine raged during Caliph ᶜUmar's rule, he requested ᶜAbbās to pray for them and himself prayed thus: O' God, whenever there was a famine earlier, we requested Thy Apostle to intercede for us and Thou wast pleased to send down rain on us. Now we seek Thy favour through the uncle of the Prophet and request Thee for a downpour.' Caliph ᶜUmar did not go to the Prophet's tomb at this hour of distress, nor any other companion did so on a similar occasion. Requesting the dead to pray is an innovation which is not supported by the Qur'ān or by the *Sunnah*.

"Thirdly, one may beseech God in this manner: 'I request Thee, O our Lord, in the name of such and such prophet or saint, whom Thou lovest to extend me a helping hand.' Invocations made in this wise are common these days but no

1. Q. XXXIX: 43-44
2. Q. XXXII: 4
3. Q. II: 255

companion of the Prophet or his successor is reported to have addressed his prayers even in this manner. Some doctors of faith permit imploring God in this way only with the name of the Prophet while there are others who hold that such petitions could be so preferred only in the life-time of the Prophet but not after his death."[1]

Solicitations from the Living

Ibn Taimiyah interdicted not only the practice of supplicating to the departed prophets, saints or other pious souls but also objected to the requests made to a man for something beyond his powers or pertaining to the matters falling within the province of Divinity. Elucidating his view-point in *Ziārat-ul-Quboor*, he says: "To implore a saint, a prophet or a king whether dead or alive, is unlawful if the object desired is such as the health of cattles, deliverance from debt without any effort to repay it, peace and happiness for one's family members, attainment of Heaven, rescue from Hell, acquisition of knowledge, learning of the Qur'ān, and the like; for, these can be granted by God alone. If anybody entreats a created being in these matters, he would be deemed to be a polytheist like pagans who worshipped the angels and the prophets and the idols or like the Christians who asked for divine grace from Jesus and Mary."[2]

Intercession

It is often contended that opposition to the invocation or calling up of the help of a prophet, saint or *wali* amounts to the denial of mediation of the prophets between man and God although they were an essential link between the Creator and the human beings. Ibn Taimiyah explained that mediation is spoken of in two distinct senses, one of which constitutes the fundamental principle of religion while the other is heretical

1. *Ziāratul Quboor, Majmu'a Rasā'il*, pp. 106-112
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 104-5

innovation undermining the bases of faith. Ibn Taimiyah wrote *al-Wāstah Bain ul-Khalq wal-Haq* for a fuller exposition of the point. In it he says that "if mediation of an apostle of God means that he is an essential link between man and God to explain the guidance vouchasafed to him by the Lord to his fellow beings, then it is entirely correct as there is no other way of knowing the ordinances and injunctions of God Almighty. We have no other means to know of the treasures of everlasting joy promised to the pious and righteous and of the Hell fire kept ready for the infidel and the agnostic. The knowledge about the nature and attributes of God is verily beyond the reach of human intellect and, therefore, it can be gained only through the prophets sent by God. This is a fundamental truth accepted by all: the Muslims, the Jews and the Christians; the followers of all the revealed religions are agreed on the need of a link between man and the Lord, a God moved soul entrusted with the delivery of God's own message to His creation. The Divine writ proclaims in no uncertain words:

"Allah chooseth from the angels messengers and (also) from mankind."[1]

"Any body who denies the mission of these chosen apostles of God is an unbeliever in the eyes of every revealed religion."[2]

"But, if mediation means that an intercessor is needed for the grant of sustenance and livelihod, patronage and the distribution of Divine bounty whom every one has to implore for obtaining these, then it amounts to associating partners to God. In fact God has condemned polytheists simply because they hoped to obtain some benefit or avoid a punishment through their saints and holy personages."[3]

However, the masses and even some of the persons belonging to the ranks of the *ʿulamā* had raised not only the Prophet of Islam but the saints and *walīs* as well to the level of living

1. Q. XXII: 75
2. *Al-Wāstah*, pp. 45-46
3. *Ibid.*, p. 46

intercessors for them at the throne of God, to whom they addressed their supplications for blessings and patronage. In regard to these misguided folk, Ibn Taimiyah says: "The *Imāms* and the doctors of faith are also connecting links like apostles, but between the Prophet of Islam and his followers: they are preachers and path-finders of religion worthy to be emulated by the believers; their concordant opinions should be accepted by all, for they can never agree on what is misleading. If they disagree on any issue, one shall have to turn back to God and the Prophet as none of these doctors can be considered impeccable in his own right like the Prophet of Islam."

"But, undoubtedly, one is an apostate and unbeliever, if one regards the saints and the divines, the *walīs* and the men of religion as divine functionaries or mediators between man and God like the stewards and attendants of a King, whom one has to approach to get into the good grace of a sovereign. Such a man should be asked to repent and if he refuses, he should be put to the sword, for, a polytheist is he who ascribes partners unto God."[1]

Origin of Saint Worship

Ibn Taimiyah traced the origin of saint-cum-tomb-worship to show that it were the Bātanites and Rafizīs who started the practice and coined spurious Traditions favouring their interested views since they wanted to awaken popular enthusiasm in their own *Imāms* and their shrines. "First of all," says Ibn Taimiyah, "they forged Traditions, which affirm the advantages and benefits of undertaking pilgrimages to the shrines of the saints. Rafizīs and other heretical sects wanted to see the mosques forsaken in order to raise these shrines in popular esteem where a new religion could be fabricated. In the Book of God and the Tradition of the Prophets one finds mention of mosques only and not of the shrines of holy men. This is what God ordains:

"Say My Lord enjoineth justice. And set your faces

1. *Al-Wāstah*, pp. 47-48

upright (toward Him) at every place of worship and call upon Him making religion pure for Him (only)."[1]

"And the places of worship are only for Allah, so pray not unto anyone along with Allah."[2]

"He only shall tend Allah's sanctuaries who believeth in Allah and the last day and observeth proper worship."[3][4]

'Be at your devotions in the mosques."[4]

"And who doth greater wrong than he who forbiddeth the approach to sanctuaries of Allah lest His name should be mentioned therein, and striveth for their ruin."[5]

"Likewise, an authentic Tradition of the Prophet goes on to say: 'There were people before you (the Jews and the Christians) who used to make churches and synagogues over the tombs. Be careful not to do the same. I forbid you to do so."[6]

He also maintained that "most of the shrines of saints are spurious tombs which were constructed by the impostors to deceive the people. Since very many people are duped by them, the shrines have not been assigned any place in the religion nor has God undertaken to safeguard them. Nor has He charged us with the responsibility of searching out the genuine tombs of the saints, for no religious observance is to be performed over them."[7]

1. Q. VII : 29
2. Q. LXXII : 18
3. Q. IX : 18
4. II : 187
5. II : 114
6. *Ar-Raddo'alal Akhnā'i*, p. 48
7. *Ar-Raddo'ālal Bakrī*, p. 313 (What Ibn Taimiyah wrote about the then shrines is borne out by the fact that there is hardly any reliable evidence to show the genuineness of numerous other shrines as, for instance, the one in Cairo where the head of Imām Husain is supposed to have been buried, the tombs of Hazrat Zainab, or the grave of Caliph 'Alī in Najaf ; certain tombs claimed to be the graves of the Prophet's wives or the shrine of Syed 'Alī Hajwairī, known as the tomb of Dātā Ganj Baksh, in Lahore, are also spurious.

Superstitious Beliefs

The cult of saint-worship had given rise to another abuse and this was the tendency to lean towards superstition and even idolatry. This misdirected reverence of the mysterious had reconciled the conscience of the believers to the so-called ability of saints to cure chronic diseases and to answer their prayers. False stories spread by the devotees of the saints asserting that their own needs had been fulfilled by their saints had fostered such a belief. But unfaltering faith and insight into the teachings of Islam guided Ibn Taimiyah to reject all such spurious claims. He could not give up the profound truth learnt from the Scripture and Traditions for the figments of saint-worshippers' imagination. He had no difficulty in reaching the conclusion that the popular belief in this regard was no more than the over-credulous and blind faith of the masses. There were certain shrines in Cairo where horses suffering from indigestion were supposed to be restored to health. Ibn Taimiyah proved that these so-called saints were really Obeʿidite or Fatimite heretics. The punishment which these heretics received in their graves was, according to the Traditions, visible to all except men and jinn. These horses also saw this punishment which was so severe and gruesome that it frightened the poor beasts to excrete and this was taken by the simple-minded folk as a sign of their restoration of health.[1] The votaries of the saints often claimed that the souls of the holy personages on whom they called upon sometimes appeared in person before them. Ibn Taimiyah rejected these claims as impious beliefs for he maintained that similar claims were made by the worshippers of the idols and stars also. These, too, he held to be devils and evil spirits appearing to mislead the misguided and unbelieving people.[2] He showed by his irresistible reasoning that such experiences were common to the ignorant people subscribing to the heathen cults but no sooner did they embrace Islam, as, for example, the

1. *Ar-Raddoʿalal Bakri*, pp. 310-11
2. *Kitābbun-Nābuwāt*, p. 274

Tartars, than the light of reasoning dawned on them and they ceased to have these demoniacal experiences.[1]

Profound Impact of Ibn Taimiyah

There was no dearth of reputed *ʿulamā* and men of letters nor were the preachers and sermonisers shy of fighting un-Islamic ideas and vestiges of the pagan past during the seventh and eighth century after *Hijrah*. If the annalists have not left any record of their efforts to combat the innovations tending to deface the true faith in the Unity of God, it is because they all remained hugging their creed but a little bewildered about how to act in pursuance of that faith in a way more effective, more far-reaching. The widespread contamination of *shirk*, pantheistic ideas and creeds which had captured the heart of the populace required an erudite scholar who could clearly distinguish between the essential elements of Islam and its un-Islamic admixtures; one who was determined to propagate nothing but the 'pure faith' and was also courageous enough to stand for what he believed to be right, regardless of the suffering it might bring upon him. *Tawhīd* or the Unity of Godhead, by its very nature, does not admit of any compromise, any concession to the opposing views and interests, and that is the reason why the apostles of God had always to be sternly firm, inflexible and unyielding in their fight against the lewdness of godlessnes and infidelity. Ibn Taimiyah deputised the prophets in combating the superstitions of his age and the unwarranted concessions to the idolatry of his times; he subjected these doctrines to such a hostile criticism that it caused a flutter in the rank of dissenters and blasphemers. The fundamental basis of Islam—faith in the Unity of God, His Absolute Power, His essential attribute of Eternity, His Omniscence—the purpose for which revelations were vouchsafed to the prophets, was once again forcefully presented by him before the world. The achievement of Ibn Taimiyah in this field alone is quite sufficient to mark him as

1. *Tafsīr Sūrah Ikhlās*, p. 118

one of the most outstanding reformers and renovators of the faith. His writings on the subject so profoundly altered the course of religious thought in the later centuries that a number of reformers after him raised their voice to restore the true faith—faith in God alone—whenever the vestiges of paganism and ignorance threatened to contaminate the teachings of Islam.

VI

Criticism of Philosophy and Dialectics

The second achievement of Ibn Taimiyah, both of a reformative as well as literary character, was to demonstrate the superiority of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* and their method of reasoning over Philosophy and Dialectics as well as logical syllogism employed by the two. In order to make an assessment of Ibn Taimiyah's reformative endeavour in this field, it appears necessary to take a cursory glance of the development of philosophy in Islam.

The Historical Background

Translation of the Greek scientific and philosophical works into Arabic had begun to be made shortly after the establishment of the Abbasid Caliphate, during the reign of Caliph Mansūr (136-158 A.H.). Numerous philosophical terms used by the Mutazilites of this period in their writings show that they were fully conversant with the works of Greek Philosophers. But the organised work of these translations began on a large scale under the royal patronage of Al-Māmūn (198-218 A.H.) who was himself an enthusiastic admirer of Greek Philosophy. Sā'yid Andlūsī writes in *Tabqāt ul-Umam* that Al-Māmūn "called for the works of Greek philosophers from the kings of Greece who sent him the books written by Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates, Galen, Euclid, Ptolemy and others. Al-Māmūn got them translated into Arabic and encouraged scholars to study them. During his reign these works became quite popular which helped to produce many an ardent admirer of philosophy

among the young and intelligent scholars of his time. These scholars were also handsomely rewarded by the royal court which vied with the Senate of the Roman Emperors."[1]

The work of translations started by Al-Māmūn continued until, by the end of the fourth century, a greater part of the philosophical and scientific literature of the Greeks was made available in Arabic.[2]

The vast extent of translations into Arabic listed the titles of quite a large number of Greek authors but owing to a predilection of the translators who were mostly Nestorian, Yaqūbi Christians or Sabians of Harran, or because Aristotelianism had prevailed among the last philosophers of antiquity, the works of Aristotle were studied by the Arabs with a special zeal. The traditions of Greek philosophy among the Arabs thus came to be associated with Aristotle who became a mark and symbol of philosophy and was invested with an aura of infallibility. It was indeed a misfortune of the Islamic East that its choice fell for a philosopher who, of all the Greek masters, was an ardent supporter of the objective existence of the material world, its primacy and eternity, and who rejected the categories of thought recognising the element of spirit, religious eschatology and the will of God.

Disciples of Greek Philosophers

The Muslim students of philosophy did not, in the initial stages, blindly subscribe to the Aristotelian logic and philosophy nor did they spare it a searching scrutiny and criticism. A number of them wrote treatises severely criticising the weaker aspects of Aristotelian philosophy and metaphysics. Foremost among these, specially Nazzām and Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī, were Mutazilite scholars. Hasan ibn Mūsa Naubakhtī wrote *Kitāb ul-Arāʾ Wad-Dayyanāt* in the third century of the *Hijrah* to disprove certain premises of Aristotelian logic, while Abū Bakr Baqillānī

1. *Tabqāt-ul-Umam*, p. 47
2. *See Fihrist ibn Nadīm* and *Tabaqāt-ul-Atibba*

composed *Waqā'iq* in the fourth century to refute Aristotle and demonstrate the superiority of Arab philosophy over the Greek thought. In the fifth century ᶜAbdul Karīm Shahrshtānī[1] wrote a monograph to contradict Proclus and Aristotle in which he brought out the contradictory features of their philosophical thought in accordance with the rules of logic. Then, by the end of that century Al-Ghazālī rose to become the greatest adversary of the Greek philosophy. His *Tahāfut al-Falāsafah* caused such a severe damage to philosophy that it could not regain its lost vigour for a hundred years.[2] Abul Barakāt Baghdādī took up this tradition further ahead through his renowned work entitled *Al-Mūᶜtabar* in which he disproved a greater part of the Aristotelian thought. Imām Rāzī, too, in the same century, proved his worth as an indomitable advocate of the Ashᶜarites and dialecticians by holding up philosophy to a severe reprobation.

But the coterie of philosophers in Islam regarded as the representative and standard-bearer of the Greek school of thought had been so powerfully enamoured by Aristotle that it held him as a prince of philosophers and an infallible teacher beyond every reproach. It seems that the respect for Aristotle continued to rise higher in this circle with the passage of time, since, every philosopher deemed it his duty to pay homage to this Greek master dutifully and in a more reverential language than his predecessor. "Both these philosophers are the founders and perfectors of philosophy and its principles and premises," wrote Abū Nasr al-Farābī (d. 339 A.H.) about Aristotle and Plato, "for every *a priori* principle and hypothesis of philosophy can be traced to them."[3] Abū ᶜAlī Sīnā[4] (d. 428 A.H.) was a still more ardent admirer of Aristotle who wrote in *Mantiq us-Shifā'*: "No addition could be made to the researches of Aristotle in

1. Author of *Al-Milal wan-Namal*
2. For details see Saviours of Islamic Spirit, Vol. I, pp. 124-27
3. *Al-Majmᶜa Bain Rai-il-Hakīmain*
4. Commonly known to the west by the name of Avicenna

philosophy despite the passage of such a long time after him."[1]

Ibn Rushd[2] (d. 595 A.H.) was the greatest philosopher born in Islam after Abī Sīnā but he shows for Aristotle the most unconditional reverence, going in this respect much further than his predecessors. His adoration for Aristotle seems to have reached the stage—to use the language of mysticism—of a total absorption into his mentor. A modern biographer of Ibn Rushd writing about his veneration of Aristotle says : "His reverence for Aristotle knows no bounds : he considers him as the man whom God permitted to reach the highest summit of perfection in wisdom and intellect. He ascribes even the qualities and attributes of God to him. Of a fact, had he been a polytheist, he would have raised Aristotle to the position of the Lord of all lesser gods."[3]

Then, in the seventh century after *Hijrah* Nasīr ud-dīn Tūsī (d. 672 A.H.) made his debut as a torch-bearer of philosophy. He is known in the circle of philosophers as Muhaqiq Tūsī (the Researcher from Tūs). He was also a Counsellor and Minister of Halākū at a time when the barbaric inroads by the Tartar hordes into the lands of Islam and the sack of Baghdad had sapped all the intellectual energy of the Muslim world. Tūsī, along with his two disciples Qutb ud-dīn Shirāzī and Qutbu-ud-dīn Rāzī, founded in Iran the school of thought which allocated central place to logic and philosophy in all the branches of secular and religious sciences. Tūsī and his followers regarded Aristotle as the Agent Intellect whose findings were the touchstone of reality. Their defence of Aristotle against the criticisms of Imām Rāzī served to give a new lease of life to the Aristotelian thought in the East.

Scientific Evaluation of Logic and Philosophy

Ibn Taimiyah was born ten years before Tūsī breathed his

1. *Al-Nadwa*, Vol. I (Quoted from *Mantiq us-Shifā'*.)
2. Known by the name of Averroes in the West
3. *Lutfī Jam'ah*, p. 155

last. When Ibn Taimiyah came of age, Aristotelianism dominated the intellectual and literary scene owing to the influence exerted by Tūsī and his followers. Thus, it was the time when a thorough grasp of Aristotelian logic and philosophy was deemed to be the summit of one's intellectual attainment, when nobody could dare to raise a dissenting voice against the teachings of the Greek master. The Traditionists and legists, without any *locus standi* in that field, could hardly do anything to stem the rising tide of philosophy. They could, at the most, pronounce the juristic opinion prohibiting the study of philosophy but that too would have been ineffective in an atmosphere surcharged with the highest regard for the philosophical concepts. Among the scholars predisposed to philosophy some had turned sceptic; others inclined to neo-Platonic concepts were preaching nihilism; while the rest suffered from an inferiority complex. How, in this atmosphere, Ibn Taimiyah was able to overcome this wave of Greek influence and how he argued powerfully against philosophy can best be seen from his own writings.

Physics and Mathematics

Of the writings attributed to Plato and Aristotle, Ibn Taimiyah too made a distinction, like Al-Ghazālī, between the investigations falling in the sphere of physics and mathematics, on the one hand, and those containing metaphysical views, on the other. He acknowledged the intellectual brilliance of the Greek philosophers and accepted the correctness of a portion of their findings pertaining to the former category. "A greater part of the discussions of these philosophers", wrote Ibn Taimiyah, "relating to physics is quite clear, detailed and convincing. They possessed intellect and aptitude to understand these subjects and, instead of being predisposed to any particular view, they seem to be searching for what is right and correct."[1] Expressing similar views about the Greek mathematics he wrote in

1. *Ar-Raddo'alal Bakrī*, p. 143

Ar-Raddoʿalal Mantaqiyin : "The mathematical formulas dealing with numerals are quite convincing and are unanimously accepted by all scholars. Every man has to have some knowledge of these for one needs them for conducting his daily business as also for further studies. Who can dispute that one is not half of two? Of a fact, their equations are acceptable, for they have no inexactness to which any objection could be raised."[1]

Metaphysics

It was, however, the metaphysics of Greek philosophy which was opposed by Ibn Taimiyah. Drawing attention towards various unreasonable and even stupid surmises of the Greek metaphysical concepts, which were branded by him as blind and naked ignorance, he observed that the Greek philosophers could have set forth their speculative thought without blundering into its metaphysical domain of absurdity and saved themselves from becoming a laughing stock. "The philosophers bringing their mind to bear upon physics", wrote Ibn Taimiyah, "show their mettle, but in metaphysics they appear to be unenlightened folk without any knowledge of what constitutes the truth. Very little of metaphysics has been handed down from Aristotle, but even that contains numerous faulty concepts."[2] In another article on the subject he says of the philosophers : "So far as the knowledge of God is concerned, these unlucky people appear to be deprived of the truth. They have no knowledge of the angels, divine scriptures, and prophets of God, for they had heard nothing about these either in favour or against them. Only some of the later philosophers acquainted with the revealed religions have spoken about these matters."[3]

Ibn Taimiyah argued that since the Greek philosophers have themselves acknowledged their inability to attain certitude of knowledge in matters falling in the domain of metaphysics,

1. *Ar-Rāddoʿalal Mantaqīyin*, p. 134
2. *Maʿarij ul-Wasūl*, p. 186
3. *Tafsīr Sūrah Ikhlās*, p. 57

their theories in regard to it can only be mere suppositions and surmises. He says: "Some of the greatest philosophers have clearly stated that there is no way known to them to reach the certitude of knowledge in matters pertaining to metaphysics. The utmost claim that they make is that whatever they say is nearer to reason. This, obviously, means that the philosophers have nothing but conjectures and presumptions to solve the metaphysical riddles; but, as the Qur'ān declares, specious reasoning can never take the place of divine revelation."[1]

Prophetic Teachings and Greek Metaphysics

Ibn Taimiyah was surprised or rather pained to see certain philosophers equating the prophetic teachings with the metaphysical speculation of the Greek philosophers. "When an educated person makes a close study of the Aristotelian metaphysics", writes Ibn Taimiyah, "he reaches the conclusion that there was none more ignorant of the gnosis of God than these philosophers." But he is even more amazed to see certain persons trying to compare the Greek metaphysics with the teachings and the knowledge obtained through the prophets of God. "Such comparisons were", according to Ibn Taimiyah, "no better than an effort to establish analogy between a blacksmith and an angel or between a petty landlord and an Emperor. In fact there can be some resemblance between petty landlords and Emperors for the former too administer a small estate but the philosophers are completely unfamiliar with the message of the prophets. Even the pagans and the Jews and Christians know more about God, His nature and attributes than these philosophers do. I do not mean to charge these philosophers of being ignorant of the knowledge revealed to the apostles of God, for that is vouchsafed to the prophets alone. They are even ignorant of the knowledge diffused by the prophets in regard to the nature and attributes of God, prophethood and Hereafter which can, to an extent, be comprehended through

1. *Naqdh-ul-Mantiq*, p. 178

reason. Even these are a sealed book for the philosophers, much less the things which are unseen and beyond the ken of human perception and are known to the prophets through revelation. There can in fact be no comparison between the philosophical metaphysics and the teachings of the prophets of God."[1]

Ignorance of Philosophers

Explaining the reason why the philosophers plead ignorance of the facts of mute reality, Ibn Taimiyah writes: "The philosophers are absolutely unfamiliar with the unseen realities taught by the prophets as also with those comprehensive natural laws which envelop all beings and creations and whose knowledge could have helped them to correctly categorise all the existing things. Only he can be capable of attempting it who can encompass the whole varied existence but the philosophers have but little knowledge of mathematics and the laws related to it. This in fact shows their comprehension of just a small part of the general causes and principles of natural phenomena. But the existence of beings and causes not known to man far exceed that of which he has any knowledge. Thus all those persons whose knowledge is limited like that of the philosophers, are taken by surprise when they are told that numerous other objects such as prophets, angels, empyrean, heaven and hell also exist. They are surprised because they believe that nothing exists beyond what they know. This is also the reason why they try to interpret the facts of unseen realities told by the prophets in the light of limited knowledge of things they possess. Their arguments are really baseless for they have no positive evidence of the non-existence of thing's not known by them. Of a fact, to lack the knowledge of a thing's existence is quite different from the non-existence of anything. It is not necessary that whatever we do not know does not have any existence. Their denial of the unseen realities is like the denial of the jinn by a physician

1 *Ar-Raddo ʿalal Mantaqiyin*, p. 395

on the ground that the medical science does not afford any evidence of their existence, although medical science does not prove their non-existence too. Similar is the case with others possessing knowledge in a particular branch of science. Whatever they find out outside the compass of their own knowledge, they deny simply out of their ignorance of it. The fact is that man has not been as much misled in owning and accepting the things as in denying that of which he has no knowledge. This is a common weakness and natural propensity of human beings which has thus been spoken of by God :

> "Nay, but they denied that, the knowledge whereof they could not compass, and whereof the interpretation (in events) hath not yet come unto them."[1]

Heritage of the Pagan Greece

Ancient Greece bequeathed to the world the valuable treasures of physics and mathematical sciences, and had illuminated the world with its intellectual brilliance for thousands of years but it was also a land of idol and star worshippers given to numerous superstitious and irrational religious beliefs. Modern researches into the historical past of the Greeks have shown that innumerable temples with a myriad of gods and goddesses littered the land. The Greek philosophy which was transmitted to the Islamic world through its Arabic translations, and thence to Europe, was permeated with its mythology and idolatrous beliefs. Transformed into philosophical terminology, the Greek mythology had been presented by its philosophers through a skilful use of syllogistic logic and a chain of reasoning, and was accepted by the Arab philosophers without any reservation as the patrimony of Greek speculative thought. Most of these philosophers had been led astray because of the inadequate knowledge of Greek history and religious beliefs. But the penetrating intellect Ibn Taimiyah possessed discerned the idolatrous bases of Greek philosophy hundreds of years before it

1. Q. X : 39

was brought to light by modern researches. He writes: "The ancient Greeks were a heathen people keenly interested in sorcery. They worshipped idols along with the stars and that is why they turned to astronomy. It was because of their belief in the occult influence of the stars upon human beings that they had built numerous temples for star worship."[1] At another place he says: "Many of their ancient and later priests promoted idolatrous practices. They called the stars as lesser gods and prescribed different religious rites for their worship. Those among the Muslims who have taken to their ways neither forbid polytheistic practices nor consider Unity of Godhead an essential part of one's faith."[2]

Distinction Drawn Between Ancient and Later Philosophers

Ibn Taimiyah made a distinction between the philosophical concepts of antiquity and those of the later philosophers, which, again, affords a proof of the agility of his mind and the deep knowledge of Greek thought. He pointed out that it was Aristotle and the later philosophers after him wedded to the view of rationality who denied their predecessors' concept in regard to the unseen realities and incorporeal objects. Describing the Aristotelian view of Greek philosophy he says: "The philosophers following the Aristotelian thought did not adopt the view held by the earlier masters and precursors of philosophy who believed in the creation of the universe and the existence of a supernatural world apart from the terrestrial one. They had spoken of the celestial world in a language which confirms the description of heaven given in the Traditions. Likewise, the ancients also believed in the resurrection of the dead as the writings of Socrates and some other philosophers affirm."[3]

1. *Tafsīr Sūrah Ikhlās*, page 57
2. *Naqdh ul-Mantiq*, p. 177
3. *Tafsīr Sūrah Ikhlās*, p. 69

Aristotle's Rejection of the Spiritual View

Ibn Taimiyah suggests that the older philosophers who had visited Syria and the adjoining lands were influenced by the teachings of the Prophets but Aristotle did not get an opportunity to go outside Greece. In *Naqdh-ul-Mantiq* he writes: "Those who have compiled the history of Philosophy say that the earlier masters like Pathagoras, Socrates and Plato had visited Syria and other countries where they learnt of the spiritual view from the companions and followers of of Luqmān,[1] David and Solomon. But Aristotle never went to the countries where prophets had lived and preached nor did he benefit from the teachings of the prophets in any other way like his predecessors. He subscribed to the cult of star worship and formulated the rationalist view which was blindly accepted by later philosophers."[2]

Modern research leaves no doubt that the whole philosophy of the Arabians was drawn from Aristotelianism and the neo-Platonic thought. Expressing almost the same view, Ibn Taimiyah says, "The philosophical concepts adopted by Al-Farābī (Alpharabius), Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), Ibn Rushd (Averroes) and Suharwardī were wholly borrowed from Aristotle whom these philosophers have named as the 'First Teacher'. "[3]

God in Greek Philosophy

Ibn Taimiyah argued that the Aristotelian concept of God reduced Him to a mere imaginary being. "When a man endowed with reason reflects over their concept of God" he says, "he comes to the conclusion that such a God can exist only in one's imagination for He cannot have any objective existence."[4]

Ibn Taimiyah holds that the philosophical concept of God, which divests Him of all virtues, powers and attributes, is not

1. Perhaps Aesop of Greek traditions.
2. *Naqdh-ul-Mantiq*, p. 113
3. *Ar-Raddo'alal-Bakrī*, p. 206
4. *Tafsīr Sūrah Ikhlās*, p. 37

only unbecoming but also derogatory of even a sentient being, much less the Creater and Master of the universe. He laments that the Muslim philosophers subscribing to the Greek philosophic view were simply blind followers of Aristotelianism who overlooked this inherent contradiction of the Greek thought. He deplores that in abjuring their faith in the revealed truth, the philosophers had renounced a blessing from God which would have really lighted their path to the certitude of knowledge.

Critique of Ibn Sina

Ibn Taimiyah severely condemned those philosophers who had tried, following the Aristotelian thought, to explain the metaphysical truths and religious creeds in the light of philosophical concepts. He argued that the unseen realities could not be explained in the light of causal relationship recognised as the guiding principle of Greek thought. Rejecting the view held by such philosophers, Ibn Taimiyah declaimed against Ibn Sīnā who was considered as the chief representative of Aristotelianism among the Muslim philosophers. In a dissertation on 'Prophethood' he cries shame upon Ibn Sīnā who "held the view that of the numerous potentialities of soul which differ among individuals, one is prophethood." Ibn Taimiyah contended: "Only a man completely ignorant of the reality of prophethood can reason in this manner. This is as if a man who is aware only of the poets, tries to prove that the jurists and physicians are also like them. Even this similitude does not fully bring out the absurdity of Ibn Sīnā's reasoning, for, the difference between a prophet and a non-prophet is much more marked and wide than that between the jurists and physicians and the poets. The followers of the Greek philosophers do not possess even a vague notion of the prophethood but they try to afford proof of its existence with the help of philosophical principles which do not possess the remotest idea of its essence and reality."[1]

1. *An-Nabūwāt*, p. 22

In the same book, summing up the views of Muslim philosophers about prophethood, he says: "Of all these groups those far away from the substance and reality of prophethood are the followers of Greek philosophy, Batinites and atheists. To them the faculty enjoyed by all human beings and also constituting the basis of prophethood is the vision during sleep. In fact, Aristotle and his immediate followers have not discussed prophethood at all while Al-Farābī considers it simply a kind of dream. There are other philosophers too who subscribe to the same view. Ibn Sīnā assigns it a bit higher status consisting of a threefold characteristic. The first one, which he calls theopneust faculty of the prophets, depends on the development of their understanding without the aid of formal instruction, but, he also holds it to be of the same nature as good sense or practical sagacity. The second characteristic of the prophets delineated by Ibn Sīnā is theophany or the faculty to conceive of something known to them, which takes the form of certain celestial forms in their imagination and is experienced through a subjective audition. These sensations resemble the visions in the dreams in which a man beholds others and talks to them but whatever he sees has only a subjective existence for nothing exists besides him. It means that according to these philosophers, whatever a prophet witnesses or hears is purely a subjective phenomenon as nobody else shares his experience. These internal sensations are of an esoteric nature without any extrinsic reality. But persons mentally deranged owing to illness or lunacy can also have similar experiences. The third characteristic of the prophets, according to Ibn Sīnā, is the power possessed by them to interpose in the material world which causes events contrary to custom.

"This is thus the explanation of miracles worked by the prophets, for, in their view, every contingent is an emanation from human, celestial or physical forces operating in the world. According to the philosophers even the internal experiences of the Prophets proceed from Active Intellect.

"Thus, when these philosophers came to know the teachings

of the prophets, they tried to reconcile these with their own philosophical concepts. For this purpose, they took up the statements of the prophets but interpreted them in the light of their own philosophical doctrines. In other words, their explanations amount to an exposition of philosophy's view-point in the words and phraseology used by the prophets. Employing the expressions and dictions used by the prophets the philosophers have composed numerous treatises and dissertations. Anybody who is not aware of the purpose and design of the prophets and philosophers and the difference between the two, comes to believe that the prophets meant what has been explained by the philosophers. Quite a good number of persons and sects have been misled by these writings. One can clearly discern this duplicity in the works of Ibn Sīnā and his followers."[1]

Critique of Dialectics

The criticism of Ibn Taimiyah was not limited to philosophy and its camp-followers alone : he did not spare even those dialecticians who endeavoured to defend Islam but employed the philosophical doctrines and concepts and its terminology and syllogism to establish the facts of unseen and unknowable reality ; for, the philosophical terms tended to impart a limited and incorrect exposition to the transcendental realities owing to their association with the philosophical traditions and precepts. Speaking of the dialecticians, he says in the *An-Nabūwāt* : "The writings of these dialecticians affirming creation, resurrection, Hereafter and the existence of the Creator are neither rationally persuasive nor canonically reassuring, and this has been acknowledged by the dialecticians as well. Imām Rāzī openly confessed when he had grown old that after pondering over the scholastic and philosophical subtleties he had reached the conclusion that these could neither quench one's thirst nor cure the sick. The reasoning of the Qur'ān, he admitted, was the most convincing. Look at the Quranic verses : *"Naught is as*

1. *An-Nabūwāt*, p. 168

His likeness"[1] or "*They cannot compass it in knowledge,*"[2] emphasizing negation of similitudes to God or those affirming His attributes, such as, "*Then (He) mounted the Throne,*"[3] or "*Unto Him good words ascend*"[4] or "*Who is in the Heaven,*"[5] and you would arrive at the same conclusion as reached by al-Rāzī. Ghazālī and Ibn ʿAqeel have also drawn similar inferences for, indeed, *this is an incontrovertible truth.*"[6]

In another passage of the same book Ibn Taimiyah highlights the mistake committed by the dialecticians. "They followed neither the path of the rationalists nor followed the teachings of the prophets with the result that, on the one hand, they deviated from their ingenuous nature, and, on the other, were also deprived of the conviction imparted by the *Sharīʿāh.* Their rationalism led them only to uncertainty and unnecessary quibbling and hairsplitting of imaginary issues."[7]

Another weakness of the scholastics towards which Ibn Taimiyah invited attention was that "when they deliberate upon prophethood they raise weighty objections but their defence is normally weak and unassuring. We have already given many examples of their specious reasoning. Whoever studies their writings to find credence and conviction, holding them up as the defenders and mouthpieces of Islam capable of proving the existence of prophethood on rational grounds, he is unable to get a satisfactory reply in their books. He becomes a victim of scepticism and mental perplexity which bar his way to faith and certitude of knowledge. The doors of doubt, unbelief and ignorance are thus opened for those whose knowledge is limited to the writings of dialecticians."[8]

1. XLII: 11
2. XX: 110
3. XIII: 2
4. XXXV: 10
5. LXVII: 16
6. *An-Nabūwāt*, p. 148
7. *Ibid.*, p. 148
8. *Ibid.* p. 240

A Common Weakness of Philosophers and Dialecticians

In Ibn Taimiyah's opinion both the philosophers as well as the dialecticians had committed a common mistake; since, despite their differences, the mode of their reasoning was the same. Their fundamental weakness, or mistake, was that they tried to achieve that with the help of reason which could never be had through it. In the process they arrayed themselves against natural human disposition as well as the guidance provided by the prophets. "Therefore," observes Ibn Taimiyah, "the findings of both these groups have many mistakes but little benefit to offer."[1]

The mode of reasoning employed by the philosophers and scholastics was, according to Ibn Taimiyah, extravagantly formal and elaborate with the result that they had to adopt a lengthy and roundabout method for establishing those facts which could have been proved easily by taking to a simpler but unsophisticated course more appealing to human intellect. He disagreed with the dialecticians that the logical syllogism was the only satisfactory method of reasoning to be applied by them.

He argued that even if the premises of their reasoning were sometimes correct, they were not fundamental because experience and study of human nature shows that God has made it easy for man to understand what is essential for him to learn. For that very reason, there are ample signs, indications and evidences of the existence and oneness of the Creator and the prophethood of His apostles, and so are the means to attain the knowledge about them. There were, however, certain persons, said Ibn Taimiyah, who had a flair for logical syllogism and argumentation but for others it was quite unnecessary.[2]

The Quranic reasoning

Ibn Taimiyah strongly pleaded that the Quranic reasoning

1. *Naqdh-ul-Mantiq*, p. 162
2. *Ar-Raddo'alal Mantaqiyin*, p. 255

was not only most appropriate but also most convincing for the avouchment of metaphysical and unseen realities and religious truths. "The arguments put forth by the Qur'ān," writes Ibn Taimiyah, "are much more assuring and carry a deeper sense than the propositions of the philosophers and dialecticians. At the same time, the former do not suffer from paralogism which is a common feature of logical disputations."[1] At another place he says, "Knowledge of the reasons advanced by the Qur'ān as well as the self-evident marks and signs adduced in support of the existence of God, His sustentation of the world, His Oneness, His knowledge and power and the possibility of resurrection and retribution in the Hereafter is essential for acquiring the noblest human qualities."[2]

In support of his contention he cites the example of the different forms of reasoning employed in support of the existence of Divine Being and His attributes which also bring out the difference between the philosophical and Quranic concepts of Godhead. "The Qur'ān is elaborate where it affirms Divine attributes but makes only a compendious reference where the negation is stressed (*Naught is as His likeness*) : this being also the way of the prophets who explicate in detail what *He is* and are concise in describing what *He is not*. On the other hand, their rivals and opponents (The Greek philosophers) pay more attention to the denial of His attributes but make only a passing reference where they have to aver them."[3]

The writings of the Greek philosophers and their votaries avouch the point made out by Ibn Taimiyah. In fact, the pains taken by the philosophers to deny the positive attributes of God have reduced His Being to an imaginary and impotent entity. But, what God is, what knowledge and power He possesses—there are not more than a few words or few philosophical terms to be found in their entire work. And, as a result of it, all

1. *Ar-Raddoʿalal Mantaqiyīn*, p. 321
2. *Ibid.*, p. 150
3. *Ibid.*, p. 153

those who had been inspired by that philosophy in Greece and outside it, have never developed any conscious relationship with God expressing itself in their intellectual ideals and moral aspirations or a heartfelt longing for His propinquity. This has been so because a waking consciousness of God can be created only through His names, attributes and manifestations indicating positive characteristics but the philosophy insists on the negation of His qualities. The history of man's intellectual development bears witness to the fact that man has never been enamoured of anyone about whose person and character he has had no knowledge. Every human affection going out to some other person or object, whether it is love or fear, hope or disappointment, is directed only to known persons or characteristics while philosophy insists on the denial of Divine attributes. The historians of religion and morals are unanimous that the ancient Greeks were not known for their devotion to God or religious genius—their religious experience had in fact no depth and substance worth the name. In the words of Ibn Taimiyah this was because "a hundred thousand negations could never be equal to a single affirmation." No religious structure can, in fact, be built on the foundations of denial alone. And that is why Greek philosophy in the West and Buddhism in the East failed to reconstruct a society whose corner stone was a heart-felt sentience of God. Both these succumbed to idolatry and atheism because the inherent human propensities of faith and conviction, devotion and love can never be satisfied by any epistemology involving intellectual wrangling and forgeries of the brain.

Disconcerting Influence of Greek Logic

In order to demonstrate the fallacious bases of logic purely on rational grounds, Ibn Taimiyah subjected its premises to a close scrutiny in the same way as he had critically examined its counterpart, the philosophy. The Greek logic had, in fact captured the heart of the Arabs even more powerfully than the philosophy of the Greeks. According to Sā'id Qartabī the

writings of the Greek philosophers on logic were being zealously studied by the Arabs as early as the third century of Islamic era. By the beginning of the fifth century these had been accorded such a pride of place in the Arab curriculum that even Al-Ghazālī was carried away by it. He considered logic to be the basic discipline of all sciences. In the introduction of his well-known book *al-Mustafā* he remarks that 'logic constitutes the fundamental discipline in every branch of knowledge. Anybody who is not well-versed in this science, can never be sure of the knowledge gained by him."[1] In *Maqāsid-i-Falāsifah* he observes : "So far as the logical permises and its *a priori* principles are concerned, most of them are undoubtedly tested and true. Only seldom is there any mistake in them. Whatever differences the doctors of faith have with the Greek masters of logic, these relate to the terminology used by the two without any divergence of opinion in regard to its aims and objectives. All are agreed that this science is meant to reach conclusions by connected thought."[2]

Ibn Rushd, who held Aristotle in the highest esteem, considered logic to be the worthiest knowledge attainable by human beings and the measuring rod of one's excellence. "Logic", he said, "opened the way to reality which could not be reached without its help even by the elite, much less the laity."[3]

Philosophy had been attacked by different scholars from time to time but nobody had undertaken a rational evaluation of logic before Ibn Taimiyah. He was thus the first scholar to subject this branch of knowledge to a minute and critical study and express his independent opinion about it. First he wrote a small treatise entitled *Naqdh-ul-Mantiq* and thereafter another detailed dissertation under the title of *Ar-Raddoʿalal-Mantaqiyin* in which he discussed logical propositions like prosyllogism, major, minor and middle terms, conclusions, etc. and showed

1. *Al-Mustafā*, p. 10
2. *Maqāsid-i-Falāsafah*, p. 3
3. *Muhammad Lutfi Jamʿah*, pp. 120-121

their defects and limitations to demonstrate that the importance accorded to logic by the Muslim scholars was far in excess of its real worth. In the opinion of Ibn Taimiyah it was neither the measuring rod of rationality nor its method of reasoning provided the surest way to attain credence, nor yet true knowledge. He writes, "These scholars claim that logic constitutes the criterion of discursive knowledge which saves one from committing mistakes in the same way as the rules of meter and rhyme help in lyrical composition or the etymology and syntax in the learning of a language or else mechanical instruments in ascertaining the hours of the day. But this is not correct, for, the knowledge is achieved through perception and rational faculty endowed to human beings by God. Its acquisition does not depend on the rules formulated by another person. It might be necessary to imitate the Arabs for learning Arabic language for the simple reason that it is the dialect of a nation which has to be heard and copied, but that cannot be true of discursive knowledge..... The people before the inception of Greek logic possessed knowledge about the reality of things; likewise there have been nations after it which have endeavoured to reach the truth of the matter without taking its help. Among every nation one can find sages who reach the core of realities without learning Aristotelian logic. A little reflection by these people would convince them that they attained the knowledge possessed by them without recourse to this man-made science."[1]

Much ado about nothing

Ibn Taimiyah pointed out quite a few weaknesses and defects of syllogistic logic. He held the view that it produced a vain and argumentative disposition, a copious and flexible idiom, and supplied the logicians with a set of pompous words and terminology which actually meant nothing. In the words of Ibn Taimiyah the endeavour of the logicians amounted to mere "waste of time and energy, and unnecessary mental

1. *Ar-Raddo'alal Mantaqiyin*, pp. 27-28

exercise and bragging which led people to useless disputation."[1] He described these verbal engagements as much ado about nothing. Another ill-effect of excessive logical ratiocination according to Ibn Taimiyah was that the logicians too often become "incapable of expressing their ideas freely. It bridles their tongue and pen by restraining them from exercising their minds independently."[2] "It is a general rule that with wider concepts and free thinking," observed Ibn Taimiyah, "the expression becomes uninhibited but the strait-laced thinking, as the logicians are wont to resort, makes their mind and tongue circumscribed by narrower limits and enchains their concept and imagination. It is because of these restraints that those logicians who are more intelligent take to a circuitous course of reasoning. Their only achievement is to express some known fact more explicitly but the habit of thinking hedged in by logical premises imparts a perverse bias of mind inclining towards scepticism and incredulity. Those not betaking the course of logicians are saved from these dangers."[3]

Ibn Taimiyah acknowledged that there were a few exceptions to it among the logicians as, for example, Ibn Sīnā whose writings exhibited remarkable eloquence and flexibility. This was because he did not adopt the literary style of earlier logicians laden with obscurities.

Logic was taken by the dialecticians as an instrument to develop the unknown or metaphysical truths from the known concepts practically in the same way as the fundamental rules and principles of other sciences are employed to acquire further knowledge in those subjects. It is worthy of notice that Ibn Taimiyah did not admit this proposition. "It is clear that the scales designed to weigh fire-wood, metals and stones cannot be used for weighing silver and gold. The truth enunciated by

1. *Ar-Raddo'alal Mantaqiyin*, p. 31
2. *Ibid.*, p. 194
3. *Ibid.*, p. 167

the prophets and the reality of prophethood is even finer and more precious than gold is considered among the metals. Your logic cannot, therefore, be employed as a balance for the latter because it comprises both human ignorance and extremism. It is neither aware of their weights and measures nor it is capable of describing them. This is a science of ignorance for it denies that which is truth ; and breeds extremism and obstinacy for it rejects that which is indispensable as well as inherent in human nature. No science can do without these imperative truths for human excellence and nobility depend on them."[1]

Another scholar of the ninth century who clearly understood the inadequacies of reason arrived at a similar conclusion. In his 'Introduction to the World History' Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808 A.H.) observed : "The mind is an accurate scale whose recordings are certain and reliable, but to use it to weigh questions relating to the Unity of God, or the after-life, or the nature of prophecy, or the divine qualities, or other such subjects falling outside its range, is like trying to use a goldsmith's scale to weigh mountains. This does not mean that the scale is in itself inaccurate. The truth of the matter is that mind has limits within which it is rigidly confined ; it cannot therefore hope to comprehend God and His qualities, itself being only one of the many atoms created by God."[2]

Ibn Taimiyah's Contribution to Logic

Far from being negative, Ibn Taimiyah's attitude towards logic was reasonably sensible as well as constructive. He agreed that a part of it was not only correct and useful but even instinctive to a man endowed with reason. At the same time he contended that it also included falacious arguments which were not needed at all.[3] He did not agree with those

1. *Nuqdh-al-Mantiq*, p. 164
2. *Muqaddamah Ibn Khaldūn*, p. 473
3. *Ar-Raddoʿalal Mantaqiyīn*, p. 201

who thought that the logical principles, as adumbrated by the masters of yore, enshrined the wisdom that was above criticism. On the one hand, his criticism of logic opened the way to its evaluation on rational grounds, while, on the other, he contributed to its development by working out complete and precise definitions and new standpoints almost untouched by his predecessors. Ibn Taimiyah argued with severity against the syllogism of Aristotle that proceeded from general principles, but he preferred the inductive method of reasoning which he held to be an easier and surer way of attaining certain knowledge. Ibn Taimiyah set himself to work out several new theories and propositions, as stated by Syed Sulaimān Nadwī in his introduction to the *Ar-Radd ʿalal Mantaqiyin*. He writes: "If you go through this book carefully you would find several discussions on philosophical and logical issues which have been touched upon for the first time by Ibn Taimiyah. Some of his views are in harmony with the analysis of the reasoning process put forth by the western philosophers. To give an example, all the earlier Muslim philosophers had followed the Aristotelian view that the universals form the basis of knowledge, and, for that reason, they had all disregarded the particulars and inductive process of reasoning. Certain western writers claim that Mill was the first philosopher to lay the foundation of modern logic by formulating the principles of inductive reasoning (although Ibn Taimiyah had worked these out hundreds of years before Mill).

"The way Ibn Taimiyah analysed and amplified the intricate problems relating to denotation of terms, genus, division, causal connection, syllogism, inductive process and *a priori* reasoning and proved the validity of the views set forth by him bear witness to the agility of his mind. So far as the theory of causal connection is concerned, he brought out exactly the same doctrine as propounded later on by Hume in his writings. As everybody knows the doctrine of causation is one of those difficult problems of philosophy which has made many a mind to falter from the right path and led them to scepticism and

agnosticism. This book contains a number of enquiries which speak volumes of Ibn Taimiyah's intellectual gifts and literary attainments."[1]

1. *Ar-Radd'alal Mantaqiyin*, p. 3

VII

Refutation of Christianity and Shiaism

Ibn Taimiyah spent his whole life fighting those un-Islamic beliefs and ideas which were making inroads in Islam from within and without. Of these only two, Christianity and Shi'aism, are mentioned here since he has left two full-fledged works for their refutation. Perhaps Ibn Taimiyah had to give more attention to these two because being well organised and vigorous, they posed a greater threat to orthodox Islam than others.

The weakening of the Islamic kingdoms alongwith the dislocation in the Muslim intellectual life produced first, by the long drawn crusades, and then by the onslaught of Tartar hordes, had given heart to the Christians to re-assert the supremacy of their religion against the Islamic faith. The objections raised by the Christians against Islam, who invited Muslims to polemical disputations, were met by the Muslim theologians but the immediate cause for Ibn Taimiyah's response to the threat from that quarter was a new book written in Cyprus. It attempted to establish the superiority of Christianity over Islam through rational as well as theological arguments and tended to show that the prophethood of Muhammad was not universal but limited to the Arabs only.

Al-Jawāb ul-Sabīh

Ibn Taimiyah wrote *Al-Jawāb-ul-Sahih liman baddala Dīn-il*

Masīh in four volumes in which he adequately met all the objections raised against Islam, adduced entirely new and satisfying arguments in support of the prophethood of Muhammad, quoted the prophecies about him contained in the Bible, traced the history of Christian church and its scholasticism and examined the varying interpretations of the Christian faith as expounded by the church fathers from time to time. In the words of a modern critic and biographer, Sheikh Abū Zahrā, "this book alone is sufficient to carve out a place for him among the thinkers and learned doctors who endeavoured to revivify the faith."[1]

Ibn Taimiyah was the first among Muslim writers who turned to the historical criticism of Christianity to show how the spiritual experiences of the early Christian community were moulded by the mythological beliefs and idolatrous practices of the Romans. He says, "The Christians have combined two religions—one preached by the prophets and the other belonging to pagans—into one. A part of their religion consists of the teachings of the prophets while the rest of it is derived from the creeds and practices of the heathens. It this way they have introduced mythological abstractions which are nowhere to be found in the prophetic scriptures. In the place of graven images casting shadows they have introduced anthropomorphic figures which do not spread any shadow. They began offering prayers facing the sun, moon and the stars and started keeping fast during autumn with the object of uniting their religious observances with the animistic cults."[2]

Prevalent Christianity

Ibn Taimiyah maintained that the virgin purity of the Christian church was violated first by St. Paul and then again in the fourth century of the Christian era during the reign of Constantine. He says that "their prelates and bishops continu-

1. *Abū Zahrā*, p. 519
2. *Al-Jawāb-ul-Sahīh*, p. 199

ously went on formulating and evolving the Christian creed and canon as, for example, 318 bishops prepared during the reign of Constantine a copious creed. This credal declaration showered invectives on Arius and others who did not subscribe to it, and contained statements which were not to be found in the scriptures. It rather had those terms and definitions which were against the teaching of the revealed books and even against sound reasoning."[1]

"In this formulary of episcopal consent," continues Ibn Taimiyah, "they did not follow Jesus Christ or the earlier prophets but produced an entirely new credal statement which cannot be traced to the teachings of the prophets. In the sermons of Jesus Christ or other prophets, neither there is any mention of the equality of three or more Divine Persons, nor of three co-eternal substances having Divine Essence. Nowhere in the scriptures any attribute or essence of God is spoken of as Logos or the Son of God, nor is there any mention of the Holy Ghost. Nor is there any assertion that God has begotten a Son who possesses all the inherent perfections appropriate to the Supreme Being, or who is composed of Divine Essence and is also a creator like God. Expressions like these, susceptible of heretical sense, are not to be found in the utterances of any prophet."[2]

Rank and Worth of the Gospels

Muslim theologians often made the mistake of equating New Testament with the Qur'ān by assigning it the position of a revealed scripture. Ibn Taimiyah held the view that the books included in the New Testament are merely a narrative of certain sayings and acts of Jesus Christ like the biographical accounts of the life of the Prophet of Islam left by Muslim historians or, at the most, these can be equated with the records of Traditions which are not considered equivalent to the Qur'ān in worth

1. *Al-Jawāb-ul-Sahih*, Vol. I. p. 18
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 134

and authority.[1] Elucidating his point of view he says: "The Christians acknowledge the fact that the books of Gospel they possess today were neither written by Jesus Christ nor were these composed under his guidance. These were written after the ascension of Jesus by Matthew and John, who were his disciples, and Mark and Luke, who had not even seen him. The accounts of the life of Jesus Christ narrated therein were not remembered and handed down by such a large number of persons as to make them of unimpeachable authority. Even the authors of these books admit that they have narrated only a part of the sayings and actions of Jesus Christ and have not attempted to give the entire account of his life. Narration of any fact by two, three or four persons only is always liable to contain some mistakes; one conspicuous mistake these narrators have made is about the person actually crucified. This makes their account doubtful."[2]

In Taimiyah goes a step further and claims that "the books of Old Testament were put into writing over a period of time with long gaps. The Jewish traditions tell us that after the destruction of the Temple and wholesale dispersal of the Jews from Palestine, the final version of the Pentateuch or Torah was got written by Ezra about whom there is a dispute whether he was a prophet or not."[3]

Speaking of the difference between the Qur'ān and the Bible Ibn Taimiyah says: "The text of the Qur'ān as well as its meaning have been transmitted by very many persons in every age and have always been accepted as authentic and genuine without any doubt having been ever raised by anybody. Similarly, Muslims have received the accounts of the person and actions of their Prophet through distinct sources whose authenticity can be judged in different ways as, for example, unbroken chain of narrators, consistent testimony of the Muslims, circumstantial evidence, etc. Enshrined in the hearts of

1. *Al-Jawāb ul-Sahīh*, Vol. I, p. 10
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 368
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 368

Muslims, the Qur'ān has not to depend for its existence on the written pages alone. If, God forbid, all the copies of the Qur'ān were to be lost, it could still be reproduced from memory but, if the Bible were to disappear, there would be no continuous reproduction of its text. The Christians have hardly anyone who has learnt the entire Bible by heart and whatever is memorised by some is not trustworthy. Their scriptures have been subjected to editing and interpolation ever since these were handed down by the apostles and that is why the Christians could not preserve the chain of their narrators. Nor have they evolved the canons for reception and rejection of their traditions or the dictionary of the narrators like the Muslims."[1]

Corruption of the Bible

It is generally believed that Ibn Taimiyah did not subscribe to the view of total corruption of the Biblical text, which, he held, was also not the Muslims belief. In his opinion the Christian and Jewish scriptures have been edited by their priests and redactors from time to time which has materially altered the sense carried by the original text.[2]

The Mistake of the Christians

Ibn Taimiyah maintained that the inability of the Christians to fully comprehend the language and message of the prophets, in which figurative descriptions and expressions were used, led them to accept Trinity which violates the prophetic concept of monotheism. Citing an example in support of his contention he says, "The writings of the people possessing revealed scriptures show that the prophets of yore had used the words 'father' and 'son' but they meant God by the former and one nearer to God by the latter. Nobody has stated that any prophet ever used the word 'son' for an attribute of God nor claimed that such an attribute was begotten by God. To assert that by the word 'son' occurring

1. *Al-Jawāb-ul-Sahīh*, Vol. II. pp. 12-13
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 373-380 and Vol. II, p. 4

in the phrase 'Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost',[1] Jesus meant that he was co-equal and co-eternal with the Divine Essence is to charge him with a blatant calumny. Similarly, the attribute of God referring to His life was never expressed as Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit. In the terminology used by the prophets holy spirit stood for the thing or being descending with Divine grace and strength on the prophets and pious souls."[2]

In another passage addressed to the Christians he says, "You would admit that the word 'son' has been used for others too besides Jesus Christ. You see Jesus Christ speaking of 'My Father and your Father,'[3] 'Father which is in Heaven,'[4] and 'my God and your God'[5] and that his disciples were 'all filled with the Holy Ghost'.[6] Likewise, in the Torah you have one finds God asking Moses: "Thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel *is* my son, *even* my firstborn: and I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, *even* thy firstborn."[7] The Torah further says: 'And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that *is* behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts.'[8] Thus the Torah speaks of entire Bani Israel as the son of God and all the people of Egypt as the son of Pharaoh. It includes even the sons of beasts amongst the son of Pharaoh. In the Book of Psalms God says to David: 'Thou *art* my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give *three*.'[9] Again, the

1. *Matt*, 28: 19
2. *Al-Jawāb-ul-Sahih*, Vol. III, pp. 181-182
3. John, 20: 17
4. *Matt*, 6: 1
5. John, 20: 17
6. Act, 2: 4
7. Ex. 4: 22-23
8. Ex. 11: 5
9. Ps 2: 7-8

New Testament says that Jesus told his disciples, 'I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I'[1] and exhorted them to pray thus: 'Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name,.....Give us this day our daily bread.'[2] In the same way the Holy Ghost did not descend on Christ alone, there are others as well who were filled with the Holy Spirit."[4]

Ibn Taimiyah then adds "In short, neither in the earlier prophecies nor in the scriptures such as Torah, Psalms or New Testament there is anything to show that the Divine Spirit had transfused into Jesus Christ or that he had an indwelling effulgence of God's glory as the Christians believe. There is nothing in these scriptures to justify Jesus being regarded as the Son of God, in an exclusive or unique sense. In reality he was no more than what the Qur'ān says: 'The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a Messenger of Allah, and His word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him.'[5] The fact is that the scriptures granted to earlier prophets and their prophecies confirm what the Prophet of Islam told us about them. Each one of them, indeed, ratifies the other. As for the predictions quoted by the Christians in support of the supernatural virtue and power of Jesus Christ, all these signs and prophecies can be applied to others besides Jesus Christ. Therefore, to appeal to these oracles for establishing the divinity of Jesus Christ is completely unwarranted. The words, such as, the son, Messiah, descent of or being filled with Holy Spirit or being addressed as the Lord are expressions used in the scriptures for others too and so none of these expressions prove that Jesus Christ possessed the perfections appropriate to the Supreme Being."[6]

The evangelistic theologians very often take resort to the

1. John 14 : 28
2. *Matt*, 6 : 9-11
3. Acts 2 : 4
4. *Al-Jawāb ul-Sahih*, Vol. III, pp. 185-186
5. Q. IV : 171
6. *Al-Jawāb-ul-Sahih*, Vol. II, pp. 189-190

mysterious arguments derived from the Platonic concepts of the Logos and the soul or spirit of the universe to prove the subtle questions covering the nature, distinction and equality of the three divine persons. Ibn Taimiyah refuted all these arguments by showing, in accordance with the principles of syllogistic logic and philosophical concepts, that none of their presumptions justifies the remotest implications of their opinion. Being unable to establish the truth of mysterious doctrines which could satisfy a rational mind, the Christian apologists try to draw a veil of sanctity over their enigmatical beliefs. They assert that the doctrine of Trinity being embedded in their Scripture, it is incumbent on them to have faith in it, and it is impious to doubt its authenticity, for, these are abstruse questions of infinite reality beyond the reach of limited understanding possessed by the human beings. But Ibn Taimiyah points out that this argument is equally fallacious. "The Christian theologians fail to distinguish," observes Ibn Taimiyah, "the things which reason holds as ridiculous and contrary to reason or rather impossible from those which it cannot comprehend or cannot pronounce its verdict in regard to their nature and existence. The apostles of God have really informed us only about the matters falling in the second category, since, the things belonging to the former category cannot simply form part of the message brought by them. These pretenders of knowledge could not make any distinction between the facts revealed and the incomprehensible mysteries which elude our enquiry. They decided to compete with the polytheists who had invented an associate of God and a son for Him."[1]

Ibn Taimiyah argued cogently to show that revelation never contradicts the facts acceptable to the normal process of thought. This also, in his opinion, brought out the basic difference between Islam and Christianity. Islam, he said, accepted certain facts of mute reality which were beyond the ken of senses but not against reason. On the other hand,

1. *Al-Jawāb-ul-Sahīh*, Vol. II, p. 89

Christianity subscribed to the doctrines which were irrational. The Christian theologians agreed that these were reasonless but they also insisted on their acceptance by holding them as revealed facts beyond human comprehension.

Early Followers of Christianity

In this book Ibn Taimiyah also gave an account of those sects of early Christianity who had faith in the Unity of Supreme Being and revered Jesus as a prophet and servant of God but which could not flourish due to a variety of reasons. The doctrinal subtleties separating different Christian factions described minutely by Ibn Taimiyah show how deeply he had studied that religion.

Prophecies about the Last Prophet

Ibn Taimiyah listed all the prophecies of the Old and the New Testaments concerning the advent of the Last Prophet. He explained the significance of the oracles attributed to Isiah, Habakkuk, Daniel and Jesus which could be appealed to foretell the coming of the Prophet of Islam.[1] To give an example, the prophecy contained in John 14 : 30 wherein Jesus is reported to have said : "Hereafter I will not talk much with you ; for the prince of the world cometh, and hath nothing in me" was explained by him to show how it referred to the Prophet of Islam. "The word *prince*", says Ibn Taimiyah, "occurring in this passage is a translation of Hebrew *arkūn* which means 'glorious', 'illustrious', 'august' and 'high in dignity'." Dwelling further upon this passage he adds "since it is a manifest and accepted fact, everbody would agree that Muhammad was the only Prophet after Jesus whose temporal and spiritual leadership has been acknowledged by the world. People obeyed him with all their heart and soul. During his life time and after his death, in all times and climes, in the East and the West his followers have yielded obediently to his commands. Allegiance

1. *Al-Jawab-us-Sahih*, Vol. III, p. 265 to Vol. IV,p 20

is owed to the sovereigns during their life-time alone for, as the saying goes, authority forgets a dying king; but for religion such an allegiance is valueless. The spirit of reverence and implicit submission elicited by the Prophets is even above the fear of chastisement and hope of reward in the Hereafter."

"Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him) brought to light the true faith of the prophets of yore, confirmed the message brought by them and exalted their names. It was on account of him that several nations acknowledged Moses and Jesus as the prophets of God. Even amongst those who had faith in the revealed scriptures, there were wide differences; they slandered David and Solomon and did not know many other prophets like Hūd, Sālih and Shuaʿib."[1]

Signs of Prophethood

In order to assert the prophethood of Muhammad, Ibn Taimiyah discussed the miracles worked by the Prophet. He did not, however, mention only the miracles recorded in the Traditions and biographies of the Prophet but also dealt extensively with the definition and nature of miracles, and extended their scope, according to the Quranic vocabulary, to include the signs which make visible and confirm the truth of prophethood. In forming an estimate of the character of the Holy Prophet he maintained that "all these, his character and deportment, his sayings and his actions constitute a miracle, as do his canons and his followers, their way of life and piety. The pure-hearted among his followers are the signs and wonders in support of his apostleship."[2]

Concerning the universality of Muhammad's prophethood, he explained the significance and merits of the beliefs, doctrines and canons of Islam, which, he claimed, are complete and satisfy the principles furnished by reason. There is nothing founded on the data of reason which has been disallowed by

1, *Al-Jawāb-ul-Sahīh*, Vol. IV, pp. 86-87
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 187

the Prophet of Islam and nothing against the dictates of reason which was upheld by him. The Book revealed to him corrected, completed and superseded the earlier scriptures while the *Shari'ah* brought by him incorporated all the guidance provided by the prophets of yore.[1] Ibn Taimiyah brought forth a series of cogent reasons to prove that anyone who believed in the prophethood of any apostle of God could not deny the prophetic mission of Muhammad ; for, whatever reasons he would adduce for the prophethood of any one of these messengers of God, they would equally apply to the last Prophet also. Similarly, the denial of the prophethood of Muhammad, for whatever reason it might be, would lead one to deny the apostleship of all other prophets.[2]

Ibn Taimiyah did not overlook the argument often preferred by the Christians that Muhammad was a prophet to his countrymen alone. He devoted more than 200 pages of the first part of *Al-Jawāb-ul-Sahīh*[3] to refute this assertion. He quoted the scriptures to show that it was essential for all men to believe in the mission of Muhammad. He also dwelt upon the grand object of divine revelation which intended to show mankind, through the apostleship of Muhammad, the right path of salvation and to bring forth all that is noble and good in man.

Minhaj-us-Sunnah

Like *Al-Jawāb-Al-Sahīh, Minhāj-us-Sunnah* is another work of distinctive merit by Ibn Taimiyah, which he wrote to refute the Shi'aite schism, then posing a threat to the integrity of orthodox faith. The book consisting of four volumes and covering 1214 pages, was written in reply to *Minhāj-ul-Karāhmah* of Ibn-ul-Mutahhir al-Hillī who had, in his excessive zeal to prove the divinely ordained office of *Imāmat*, tried to make out the first three

1 *Al-Jawāb-us-Sahīh*, Vol. IV, pp. 81-82
2. *Ibid.*, Vol I, p. 180
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 28-230

right-guided Caliphs not merely hypocrites and imposters but also the vilest creatures steeped in inequity. This, according to Ibn Taimiyah, discredited Islam and made the concept of prophethood untenable. Despite its polemical nature the *Minhāj-us-Sunnah* is remarkable for the sobriety of its style and the pursuit of details and accuracy.

Vilification of the Prophet's Companions

Discussing the logical result of the Shi'aite denigration of the Prophet's companions, Ibn Taimiyah observes[1]: "The followers of the Prophet of Islam constitue the best of people and the worthiest in excellence and merit among them were those who first embraced Islam. But the picture drawn by these slanderers shows that the earliest Muslims had neither any inkling of the Truth nor they followed it faithfully; since, according to the Shi'āhs, most of them, particularly the first three Caliphs knowingly opposed the teachings of the Prophet. All the companions, they say, followed these tyrants because they did not possess those intellectual faculties which are required for discernment of the true path of Islam. Now, it is not difficult to conceive how lustful and power-hungry, unenlightened and mindless men the companions and Caliphs were according to Shi'āhs. They charge the Caliphs of laying a claim to the Caliphate to look after their own interests. Thus, all the followers of the Prophet went astray by forsaking the path of Truth. If this view is accepted, the Jews and the Christians would, of a fact, be better than the Muslims for God bears a testimoney in the Qur'ān that "of the Moses' folk there is a community who lead with truth and establish justice therewith."[2] The Prophet has foretold that of more than seventy factions of the Jews and Christians, only one would qualify for salvation but if we accept the Shi'aite view there would not be a single sect among the Muslims which could be deemed as the

1. *Minhāj-us-Sunnah*, Val. I, p. 152
2. Q. VII : 159

standard bearer of Truth and Justice. If the best in faith among the Muslims were so depraved, what can be said of those coming after them? Does it not prove that the Jews and the Christians are better even after the corruption of their scriptures and faith, and worthier than those about whom God has said: *Ye are the best community that hath been raised up for mankind.*"[1]

Ibn Taimiyah quotes Imām Shuᶜebī to show that even the Jews and Christians hold their prophets in greater reverence than the Shiᶜāhs do. He says, "Asked to indicate the purest in faith among them, the Jews replied that the Elders accompanying Moses and their followers were the noblest believers. In reply to a similar question the Christians said that the disciples of Jesus Christ were the most pious amongst them. But when the Shiᶜāhs were required to suggest the most profane and irreligious amongst Muslims they pointed out to the companions of the Prophet of Islam. Ah! They were commanded to invoke blessings of God on these pious souls but what they are doing is to curse and swear at them."[2]

Denigration of the Companions

Ibn Taimiyah pointed out that the predisposing cause responsible for the Shiᶜāhs standing apart from and almost in hostile attitude to the rest of Islam lay in the impassible bitterness harboured by them towards the first three Caliphs, in particular, and the majority of Prophet's companions, in general. The denigration of the early precursors of Islam by them is really a cloak for their hostility to the Prophet whose life-long labour could not, in their opinion, win over even a handful of sincere followers. The stand taken by the Shiᶜāhs, says Ibn Taimiyah, also bespeaks of the inability of the Prophet to forewarn the Muslims about the secret designs of the hypocrites and the events that followed immediately after his death although he had made predictions about things that were to take place

1. Q. III : 110
2. *Minhāj-us-Sunnah*, Vol. I, p. 6

hundreds of years after him. Not only that, the respect and confidence of the Prophet enjoyed by his eminent companions shows that either the Prophet could not foresee the danger for the future of Islam or had put a false appearance upon his outward behaviour towards them. In either case, it would be difficult to justify his action as behoving the dignity of a prophet." "Thus", concluded Ibn Taimiyah"[1] only those would vilify the eminent companions who either nourished a secret feeling of ill-will against Islam and its Prophet, like the originator of Shi'āism and the leaders of the Bātinite movement, or, the unenlightened folk prodded by their selfish desires and ignorance, as generally are the rank and file of the Shi'ā schism."

Excellence of the Companions

Ibn Taimiyah did not claim that the companions of the Prophet of Islam were without a spot or blemish or were not liable to sin like the apostles of God. He, however, did assert that being the most pious and pure of heart in the entire community, they were just, God-fearing, truthful, sincere and upright. If they ever committed a sin, they repented and strenuously tried to atone for their mistakes through prayers and fasting and virtuous actions. Their virtues and merits outweighed their faults. Explaining his view-point he says,[2] "We have already stated that we do not hold that there was anybody impeccable after the Prophet of Islam, much less his not forming a wrong opinion in juristic matters. The writ of God runs for them:

"And whoso bringeth the truth and believeth therein—such are the dutiful.

"They shall have what they will of their Lord's bounty. That is the reward of the good:

"That Allāh will remit from them the worst of what

1. *Minhāj-us-Sunnah*, Vol. IV, p. 123
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. III. p. 238

they did, and will pay them for reward the best they used to do."[1]

Ibn Taimiyah has succinctly brought out the unreasonableness of the Shi'āhs in regard to the companions of the Prophet of Islam. To borrow his words: "The companions were, regardless of their human shortcomings, the best group of persons among the Muslims by virtue of their faith and righteousness. Their deficiencies would appear insignificant if we were to compare their morals and behaviour with the comportment of the followers of other faiths. Actually the fault lies with those who can see a black stain on a white sheet but are unable to detect the white scratch on a black bedspread. This is, in fact, a great injustice as well as foolishness, for, one can easily find out the merit and worthiness of the companions by comparing them with those known for their purity of faith and morals amongst the followers of other religions. How far the standard set by these persons can be deemed to be just if they visualise a criterion of righteousness unattainable by man? If someone pictures to oneself of an impeccable Imām or a religious teacher who, sometimes not even named as an Imām, is not liable to err, and demands that every learned man, religious teacher, ruler or king, notwithstanding his erudition, temperance and the virtuous deeds performed by him, should be a replica of that ideal; whose knowledge should compass all the hidden mysteries of nature, who should be an acme of perfection free from all human shortcomings and who should never let his angry passions rise; then, nothing can be done to deliver such a man from the fantasy of his mind. There are, in truth, many amongst them who endue their Imāms with cardinal virtues not possessed even by the apostles of God."[2]

At another place he writes[3] "Any one who has studied the history of various religions would know that there has never

1. Q. XXXIX: 33-35
2. *Minhāj-us-Sunnah*, Vol. III, p. 241
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 242

been a group of persons more pious and devout and more mindful of avoiding schism and breach in religion than the companions of the Prophet. These were the persons about whom God has said : 'Ye are the best community that hath been raised up for mankind. Ye enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency; and ye believe in Allah."[1]

"Whatever goodness and virtues Muslims shall possess to the end of time", adds Ibn Taimiyah, "whether it be the Faith or the Qur'ān, knowledge or prayers, entry in Paradise or protection against Hell, ascendency over non-believers or glorification of God, it shall all be the fruit of earnest efforts made by the companions of the Prophet who preached the religion and fought in the way of God. Every man who embraces Islam shall lie under an obligation to them till the Doomsday. Even the virtues, the Shi'āhs and others have, are the gifts from the companions, who, in turn, were inspired by the right-guided Caliphs; for the latter were the fount of all the blessings whether of this world or the next."[2]

Caliphate of Abū Bakr

Election of Abū Bakr to the office of caliphate has been the greatest bone of contention between the Shi'āhs and Sunnīs. Explaining the significance of the elective principle regulating the appointment of the Caliphs, Ibn Taimiyah observes: "It is worthy of note that the caliphate of Abū Bakr and 'Umar is really a sign of the perfection of divinely-appointed prophethood of Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him). They furnish a proof that he was not a king but an apostle of God; for the kings always prefer to pass on the sceptre of authority to their nearest relations. To the kings this is an essential step to save their kingdom (from falling into the hands of others). So we also see the rulers and governors around us acting in a similar manner. The Saljukids and the

1. Q. III: 110
2. *Minhāj us-Sunnah*, Vol. III, p. 245

Sultāns of Syria and Yeman pass on their kingdoms to their kith and kin, and this has been the practice followed by the Christian and heathen kings as well. The kings of the Franks and those belonging to the progeny of Chenghiz Khān always ensure that the kingship remains within their family. They are always mindful whether the successor is of their family and blood or not. But, disregarding this universal practice, the Prophet did not nominate his uncle ʿAbbās or his cousin ʿAlī or ʿAqīl or another relation like Rabīʿa ibn al-Hārith ibn ʿAbdul Muttalib or Abū Sufyān ibn al-Hārith ibn ʿAbdul Muttalib as his successor, and this shows that the Prophet was not guided by the regal precepts and conventions. Besides the relatives already named, there were also ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, Khalid ibn Saʿeed ibn al-ʿAas, Abān ibn Saʿeed ibn al-ʿAas and others belonging to Banū ʿAbd Munāf—the most respected clan of the Quraish and nearest to the family of the Prophet—but none of them was nominated to succeed him. This proves that Muhammad was a prophet and slave of God and not a king. He never bestowed his favour on anybody merely on account of the nobility of blood or relationship with him but conferred his blessings only on grounds of one's faith and piety. This was an indication for his followers that they shall not endeavour to establish the rule of any clan or family but uphold the kingdom of God on earth. They were not to follow even those prophets of yore who had been granted kingship by God because Muhammad was allowed to choose between kingship and the slavery of the Lord and he chose to remain a slave and a prophet. The caliphate of Abū Bakr and 'Umar was thus a consummation of his teachings. Had he nominated someone of his own household as his successor he would have been accused of accumulating wealth and riches for his progeny."[1]

The Shiʿāhs maintain the divine and indefeasible right of ʿAlī for succession to the caliphate on the death of the Prophet They assert the right of ʿAlī because he happened to be the

1. *Minhāj-us-Sunnah*, Vol. IV, p. 126

cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet. They also claim that ʿAlī was expressly declared by the Prophet as his successor under divine guidance. Ibn Taimiyah, however, points out that the "claim of ʿAlī's succession, based on his nearness of kindred to the Prophet bears resemblance to the conventions of the pagan past when tho Arabs were unduly predisposed in favour of their own clans and kins."[1] Likewise, the unwarranted veneration of ʿAlī and other members of the Prophet's household by the Shiʿāhs, as partakers of divine nature, is looked upon by Ibn Taimiyah as impairing their dignity rather than being complimentary to them. "The excessive veneration of Husain's progeny by the Shiʿāhs", says Ibn Taimiyah, "exposes them to a bitter trial for they adulate them in a way which brings them into discredit. The contentions of the Shiʿāhs about their claims to succession of the Prophet are also entirely unsupportable. In fact, had their biographical accounts by Sunnī writers not been available, what the Shiʿahs relate about them would have been more of a condemnation than a compliment to them."[2]

Al-Hillī had profusely quoted Traditions and Quranic passages to establish the merit and excellence of ʿAlī and other *Imāms* of the Shiʿāhs or to denigrate the first three Caliphs. Ibn Taimiyah subjected each one of these quotations to a searching scrutiny in order to show that these had either been cited out of context or misinterpreted in favour or against someone according to the whims and prejudices of the author of *Minhāj-ul-Krāmah*. To give one example here, Al-Hillī had cited the following Qurānic verses :

> "He hath loosed the two seas. They meet. There is a barrier between them. They encroach not (one upon the other). Which is it, of the favours of your Lord, that ye deny? There cometh forth from both of them the pearl and coral-stone."[3]

1. *Minhāj-us-Sunnah*, Vol. IV, p. 287
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 125
3. Q. LV : 19-22

Al-Hillī then proceeded to expound that "the two seas" alluded to ʿAlī and Fātimah, "the barrier" to the Prophet and "the pearl and coral-stone" to Hasan and Husain. Ibn Taimiyah examined the exegesis of Al-Hillī in some detail to show that the interpretation given by him betrayed agnostic tendencies of Qarmātians and Bātinites who invested the Quranic vocabulary with an enigmatic or allegorical sense. Ibn Taimiyah then gave numerous reasons to disprove the contention of Al-Hillī. He showed that the abovementioned verses were revealed at Mecca while Hasan and Husain were born at Madina. Again, these verses were elucidated further by another revelation which said: "And He it is Who hath given independence to the two seas (though they meet); one palatable, sweet, and other saltish, bitter."[1] Thus, said Ibn Taimiyah, if one were to identify ʿAlī and Fātimah with the "two seas", one would also have to accept one of them as saltish and bitter. Likewise, "the barrier", if taken to mean the Prophet, would amount to his disparagement, for the barrier is always an obstacle or an agency that keeps two things apart.[2]

Still more significant is the section in which Ibn Taimiyah replied to the charges levelled by Al-Hillī against the first three Caliphs. By applying the sound method of criticism to the imputations of Al-Hillī and supplementing it with accurate and reliable historical data, he showed how low a prejudiced mind can stoop to malign one's supposed enemies.

Shiʿaite Beliefs

Ibn Taimiyah also devoted a section of *Minhāj-us-Sunnah* to the discussion of the Shiʿaite tenets of faith whereby he demonstrated the hollowness and contradictions of their beliefs. To give an illuminating illustration, he accuses the Shiʿāhs of having committed almost the same mistake as the Christians who had endued Jesus with divine attributes as the 'Son of God',

1. Q. XXV: 53
2. *Minhāj-us-Sunnah*, Vol. IV, pp. 67-68

and then depicted him as 'a meek and helpless preacher.' "The Shiᶜāhs subscribe to contradictory doctrines", says Ibn Taimiyah. "On the one hand, they magnify ᶜAlī's prowess and courage to such an extent that he appears to be the chief defender of the Faith, on whose help even the Prophet had to depend, and who was, in that task, no less than a partaker of Divinity. But, after Islam became strong and powerful, he grew so feeble and humble that he had to take recourse, like a helpless and shaky man, to smoothing down and deying his religious beliefs in order to save himself from persecution. Then, there appears to be no other man more spineless and important than ᶜAlī, although the fact is that his conversion to Islam had increased his courage of conviction. How could a man supposed to be an ally of God in establishing Islam and subduing the non-believers fail to bring his valour to his aid especially after embracing Islam, to vanquish those who were denying justice to him? His adversaries were then fewer in number and lesser in strength than the pagans whom he had earlier subjugated."[1]

Ibn Taimiyah deprecated the lack of interest on the part of Shiᶜāhs in the study of the Qurᵓān and the *Sunnah*, the performance of prayers and other religious observances and the upkeep of mosques. He traced the reason for this irreligious behaviour to the Shiᶜaite beliefs which carry the veneration for their *Imāms* so far as to raise them to the position of a divine person. Concerning the theory of *Imāmat*, particularly the reappearance of the twelfth *Imām* who is believed to have concealed himself in some secret place till the day of his manifestation before the end of the world, Ibn Taimiyah explained the untenability as well as harmful effects of that doctrine. He demonstrated through cogent reasoning and irrefutable evidences that the Shiᶜaite theologians generally follow the Muᶜtazilites, although some of them have also been attached to the school of Greek philosophers. Some of them, like the author of *Minhāj-ul-Krāmah*, had tried to combine their knowledge of Greek philosophy

1: *Minhāj-us-Sunnah*, Vol. IV, p. 56

and logical syllogism of the Muʿtazilites with their Shiʿaite beliefs and doctrines to provide a defence for their religion. However, for an erudite scholar of both the religious and secular sciences, that Ibn Taimiyah was, it was not difficult to refute the Shiʿaite arguments, point by point, and to thoroughly expose their fallacies.

VIII

Rejuvenation of Religious Thought in Islam

Ibn Taimiyah was born at a time when the prevalent sciences, both religious and discursive, and particularly those like exegesis, Traditions, jurisprudence and the corpus of law had already been developed to an extent that the educated persons normally specialised in any one subject. Sufficient literature, enough to fill in a library, had by then been accumulated on each of these sciences. There were also several scholars of outstanding intelligence and ability, who were not only deemed an authority on their subject, but were also known for their wide knowledge and strong retentive memory. That this is no mere speculation is proved by the writings of the doctors like Kamāl ud-dīn Ibn Azmalıkānī, Taqi ud-dīn ʿAlī ibn Subkī, Shams ud-dīn az-Zahabī and Abul Hajjāj al-Mizzī. There were, at that time, scholars who could have been called a living encyclopaedia for their extensive knowledge. In summing up the intellectual attainments of the age, however, a marked deficiency noted by every historian is that there was no master-mind who could not only compare with his predecessors in extensive knowledge but could also make an estimation of their views, analyse and determine their worth and bring in his own verdict in those matters. In other words, the extensiveness of knowledge possessed by the then scholars was not matched by the depth and originality of thought of the preceding ages. Thus, the scholars of the time, instead of investigating afresh the

material already existing, were content to collect, edit and interpret them in a series of commentaries and classified glossaries.

Ibn Taimiyah's Intellectual Endeavour

A fresh intellectual element was ushered by Ibn Taimiyah who, besides, digesting the existing knowledge of the time, presented it afresh with the fullness and critical guarantees behoving a creative thinker. With his deep knowledge of the Qur'ān and insight into the purposes and underlying objectives of the *Sharīᶜah* and the principles of jurisprudence, Ibn Taimiyah could present whatever subject he chose to scribe, with a marked authority and comprehensiveness. There is not a single composition by him whose range is not so wide that it could not be described as an encyclopaedia on the subject—bringing into its compass all the existing knowledge of the time and opening new vistas of vision. We have already discussed in some detail two of his works, namely, *Al-Jawāb-ul-Sahih* and *Minhāj-us-Sunnah*, but there are still more outstanding monographs on other subjects, such as, *Kitāb-un-Nabūwat*, *Ar-Raddo-ᶜalal Mantaqiyīn* and *Iqtidhā'-us-Sirāt-il-Mustaqīm*, to name only a few, which combine comprehensiveness with critical thinking and provide food for thought to their readers.

Exegesis of the Qur'ān

The principal object of Ibn Taimiyah's literary endeavours was exegesis of the Qur'ān : an interest so predominant that its influence can easily be seen in his almost every work. Whenever he quotes any verse from the Qur'ān in his writings, he does not proceed further without giving its interpretation. According to his disciples his commentaries of the Qur'ān run into as many as thirty volumes. Unfortunately, none of these works survives today except in fragments consisting of the exegesis of certain Quranic chapters. Had these volumes been available today they would have undoubtedly constituted one of the most valuable collection on the subject displaying his remarkable critical

faculty and acuteness of thought. The commentaries of *Sūrat-ul-Ikhlās*, *Maʿūwztain* and *An-Nūr* along with the exegetical excerpts taken from different works by Ibn Taimiyah, published recently, exhibit his comprehensiveness, mental grit, reformative zeal and the developed sense of interpreting the Scripture in accordance with the current needs of the time. He also wrote a monograph on the principles of exegesis of the Qurʾān which is perhaps the first dissertation of its kind on this subject. That the surpassing interest of Ibn Taimiyah lay in the science of exegesis was acknowledged by his contemporaries who on his death invited the people to offer the funeral prayer of the commentator of the Qurʾān.

Traditions

Ibn Taimiyah has not left any book on Traditions or their interpretation. In fact, the remarkable advancement made in this field by the seventh and eighth centuries after *Hijrah*, had hardly left any scope for further endeavour in that direction but his writings on the principles of Tradition, bio-data of the narrators, canons for the reception and rejection of Traditions, their critical analysis and classification of juridical Traditions, scattered in his different works constitute his valuable contribution to the subject. All this material, which is quite extensive, if collected in a single volume, could serve to provide his authoritative views on the different issues of this important science.

Principles of Jurisprudence

The task of legal definition and formulation of juristic opinion was another endeavour which absorbed Ibn Taimiyah's intellectual energies. Having attained masterful proficiency in this field too, his writings on the subject contain discussions on intricate legal issues. Ibn Taimiyah's compositions on jurisprudence comprise *Iqtidhāʾ-us-Sirāt-il-Mustaqim* and a voluminous collection of his juristic opinions along with some smaller treatises like *Al-Qiyās* and *Minhāj-il-Wasūl ila-ʿIlm-il-Usūl*.

The work relating to the compilation of legal precepts of

the different juristic schools had almost been completed by the time of Ibn Taimiyah. Still, he reviewed several issues with the fullness of a critical mind which imparted a fresh dynamism to the legal system. In expressing his legal opinions, Ibn Taimiyah's constant endeavour was to provide guidance for the changing needs in the light of the *Shari'ah* and to bring in a closer conformity between the principles of legal systems and the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. The legal opinions as well as the principles governing them, enunciated by Ibn Taimiyah have been preserved in four volumes under the title of *Fātāwah Sheikh-ul-Islām Ibn Taimiyah*.[1]

Dialectics

Ibn Taimiyah's writings on dialectics and credal issues constitute more than half of his entire composition. A few of these are named after different cities (from which the specific issues were referred to him), such as *Sharah Isbahāniyah, Wāstiyah, Tadmuriyah, Risālah-i-Hamwiyah, Kūlāniyah, Baghdādiyah* and *Azhariyah*. Each one of these furnishes evidence of his penetrating intellect, logical thinking, comprehensive knowledge and religious fervour.

Revival of Religious Thought

Ibn Taimiyah's literary endeavours, both extensive in scope and deep in content, which combined the dogma with reason, served to clear away the cobweb spun by imitative theologians during an age of stagnation and immobility. The field of his intellectual pursuits is so large that it can be covered only by a long and intensive study. Here it would suffice to mention that his insistence on adhering to the original teachings of Islam firmly established revelation as the sole

1. It has since been published from Egypt in 1326 A. H. Recently, the collection of his *Fatāwa* including his unpublished juristic opinions has been brought out in 30 volumes in Saudi Arabia. These volumes really constitute an encyclopaedia on Islamic jurisprudence.

criterion of any theological movement. He brought out explicitly the limitation of human reason and the futility of attaining knowledge of God through rational and philosophical methods in a way more appealing to the critical minds, than the earlier doctors. Alongwith these, his independent and critical attitude towards the earlier authorities and text-books, and the rejection of the rigidity of scholastic method generated a process of improvement by rejuvenating not only religious sciences but also by re-charging the intellectual and moral life of his time with renewed vitality. Like every fiery spirited reformer, having all the gifts of intellectual brilliance, wisdom and courage, he sounded a new note in literature and religious thought which has ever since provided inspiration to the Muslim world. Ibn Taimiyah stands out as indisputably the greatest thinker and reformer in Islam whose influence extends to almost every reformative movement started since the eighth century, and particularly to those which gained impetus during the twelfth century of the Islamic era. His intellectual heritage still continues to appeal and stir the reformative zeal of the thoughtful element in Islam who want to re-state the truths of Islam as a self-sufficing ideology based on a revelatory eschatology and spiritual-moral view of life and the world as against the present-day materialistic thought-patterns and institutions.

Thus, the greatest contribution of Ibn Taimiyah to the Islamic thought was to re-assert the supremacy of the Scripture and the way of the Prophet, and to demonstrate how, m the changed circumstances, the whole of the religious life and thought could be reconstructed on that basis. He never compromised with any un-Islamic thought or practice which injured faith in the Oneness of God and the revelatory basis of creed and dogma, be it the popular belief of the misguided mystics and masses or the abuse of intellectual subtlety of philosophers and dialecticians or else the dogmatism of the theologians and jurists. He recognised only the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* as the two valid bases for the reconstruction of religious thought which meant, on the one hand, rooting out of all the un-Islamic

beliefs and practices and, on the other, a positive monotheistic interpretation of all ideas and institutions. In setting up the forgotten ideals and showing the way how these could guide the changing social, intellectual and moral life of the community, Ibn Taimiyah prepared the ground for a permanent revivalist movement in Islam.

SULTAN.UL.MASHAIKH

KHWAJA NIZAM UD DIN AULIYA

Sultan-ul-Mashaikh

KHWAJA NIZAM UD DIN AULIYA

I

The Chihstiyah Order in India

The sixth century of the Islamic era (the twelfth century A. D.) was a period of special significance when a new country, rich in natural and human resources, was being gradually added to the realm of Islam. The country was destined to become, in the near future, not only the centre of Islamic missionary endeavour but also of its creative, intellectual and social energies.

In the beginning of the sixth century the barbarous Tartar legions had swept over the lands of Islam and destroyed, as if by a torrent, great cities, centres of learning and education, mosques and monasteries as well as every semblance of civilized existence in the countries overrun by them. Bukhārā, Samarkand, Ray, Hamādān, Zanj, Qāzwin, Marv, Nishāpūr, Khwārism and then Baghdād, the metropolis of Islam, were reduced to ashes. The Mongol onslaught eclipsed not only the political ascendancy of Islam in all these lands lying in the West Asia but also paved the way for its social and intellectual disintegration. Only India, ruled by a strong, vigorous and zestful Turkish clan, was then able to fend off the assault of the Mongols in this region. In the Islamic world, only they possessed

the prowess as well as religious zeal which made them a match or perhaps superior to their adversaries. The Mongols made repeated assaults but were always repulsed. During the reign of Alā' ud-dīn Khiljī alone, they advanced five times against India but were beaten back: first in 696 A. H. and then on the occasion of their fourth and fifth attacks Malik Ghazi Tughlaq fought so bravely and inflicted such crushing defeats on the Mongols that, in the words of a historian, "dejected and disheartened, they gave up their attempts to conquer India as a forlorn hope."[1]

Waves after waves of refugees, many of whom were men of culture and religion, wended their way to the safety of India from Iran, Turkistān and Iraq which soon made Delhi vie with Cardova and Baghdād. Even some of the smaller towns and sub-urban centres in India rivalled, thanks to the convergence of numerous learned personages, such reputed centres of learning as Shirāz and Yeman. The historians of the time like Ziā' ud-dīn Barnī and others have listed the names of hundreds of such persons belonging to rank and nobility, learned doctors, men of letters and renowned mystics who had migrated to India owing to Mongol depredations. Soon after their arrival in India they took up posts of responsibility under the then administration or engaged themselves in teaching and preaching. It seems, as the annalists report, that India had then inherited the entire intellectual patrimony of the Islamic world.[2]

These circumstances contributed not only to the development of India's creative genius but also pointed out its future role, that it assumed not long after, as the centre of social and cultural, religious and intellectual activities in the world of Islam for many centuries to come.

The Builders of Islamic India

The discovery of India by the sons of Islam was in no way

1. *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārīkh*, p. 186 and *Tarīkh Firoz Shāhī*, pp. 251, 302 and 323
2. *Tarīkh Firoz Shāhī*, pp. 111-113

less momentous than the discovery of America by the West. Muslim adventurers had begun to push their way to India in the first century of Islamic era. After Muhammad ibn Qāsim Thaqaffī had captured the land lying between Sind and Multan in 93 A. H., numerous cloisters and monasteries of Muslim saints and sūfīs had sprung up like heavenly lights in the gloom of surrounding polytheism and ignorance. But it was really Mahmūd of Gazni (d. 421 A. H.) who carried the Muslim arms with unvarying success to India and Shahāb ud-dīn Muhammad Ghorī (d. 602 A. H.) who firmly planted the standard of crescent in this country. Likewise, the Heaven had pre-ordained the spiritual conquest of India to the lot of the great mystic saint, Sheikh-ul-Islām Mo'īn ud-dīn Chishtī (d. 627 A. H.). Long before the Muslim conquest of India, all the four mystic orders in Islam viz. *Qādiriyah*, *Chishtiyah*, *Naqshbandiyah* and *Suharwardiyah* had already come into existence. Each of these has its share in the regeneration of Islam in India but God's will had selected the *Chishtiyah* order for providing spiritual nourishment to the nascent sapling of the faith in this country—'Thy Lord bringeth to pass what He willeth and chooseth'.[1]

Ways of God are inscrutable, indeed, but it appears that the *Chishtiyah* order, engaged in enkindling the flame of the divine love in the hearts of the people in the adjoining land of Iran, was bound by a neighbourly obligation to India. It was but easier as well as incumbent on it to win over the inhabitants of India who have ever been willing to acknowledge the message of love and devotion to the Lord. For whatever reasons the Providence had selected the *Chishtiyah* order for disseminating the religion of Peace in India, one of the Chishtī Sheikhs, Khwāja Abū Muhammad Chishtī,[2] turned the direction of his

1. Q. XXVIII : 68

2. Khwāja Abū Muhammad Chishtī (d. 409 or 411 A. H.) was the son and spiritual successor of Khwāja Abū Ahmad Chishtī who was a disciple of Khwāja Abū Is'hāq Shāmī. He was succeeded by Khwāja Nasīr ud-dīn

[Continued on next page

efforts towards India. It is related that the campaigns of Mahmūd of Ghaznī owed their success to his blessings. Maulānā Jāmī writes in *Nufhat-ul-Uns*: "When Mahmūd had already left for Somnath,[1] Khwāja Abū Muhammad received the divine summons to join the expedition. Although he was then 70 years of age, he joined the campaign with a retinue of his followers.[2]

Khwāja Moʿīn ud-din Chishtī

Khwāja Moʿīn ud-dīn belonged to Sajastān[3] in Iran. Some of the older historians including Qāzī Minhāj ud-dīn ʿUthmān Jauzjānī, a contemporary of Khwāja Moʿīn ud-dīn Chishtī and author of the *Tabqāt-i-Nāsrī*, asserts that the Khwāja accompanied Sultan Shahāb ud-dīn of Ghor, better known to history as Muhammad Ghorī, when he gave battle to Prithvīrāj and defeated him finally at Tarāin. The annalists of the period relate that invocation of divine blessings by the Khwāja was responsible for the spectacular success achieved by Muhammad Ghorī against his foe.[4]

The writings of the later historians, however, show that Khwāja Moʿīn ud-dīn had arrived in India and taken up his

Abū Yūsuf after whom the mantle of succession passed on in this wise to one after another: Khwāja Qutb ud-dīn Maudūd, Hājī Sharīf Zandnī, Khwāja ʿUthmān Hārwānī and Khwāja Moʿīn ud-dīn Chishtī.

1. Sultan Mahmūd attacked Somnath in the year 416 A. H. while Khwāja Abū Muhammad Chishtī died in 409 or 411 A. H. If the story told by Maulānā Jāmī is correct, the incident should relate to an earlier expedition of Mahmūd and not to the attack on Somnath.
2. *Nufhat-ul-Ins*, p. 207
3. The Khwāja is commonly known as Sanjarī, which is a corruption of Sajazī denoting an inhabitant of Sajastan which, according to the old geographers, formed part of the then Khurāsān, is now divided between Iran and Afghanistan. Its capital was situated at Zaranj, near Zāhidān where its ruins can still be seen. Its limits once extended up to Ghaznī.
4. *Tabqāt-i-Nāsrī* I, p. 120, *Tārīkh Firishta*, II, p. 57 and *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārīkh*, p. 50

residence at Ajmer in the initial period of Muhammad Ghorī's Indian expeditions extending from 571 A. H. to 602 A. H. Ajmer was then the capital of the Imperial Chauhān (Chahwāna) Kings of northern India as well as a celebrated place of pilgrimage.[1]

Prithvīrāj Chauhan

Prithvīrāj (571-588 A. H.) was the son of Someshwara, the only surviving son of Anorāj and the brother of Vigrahrāj, also known as Bisāldeo. Anorāj is considered to be the founder of Chauhān Kingdom of Ajmer. Someshwara is said to have wielded an equal authority over both the Chauhān court of Ajmer and the Tomar court of Delhi. Having been married to the daughter of the last Tomar ruler of Delhi, Anandpāl, his son Prithvīrāj claimed lineage and relationship with the Tomar branch of the Rajpūts. Since Anandpāl was issueless, he had adopted Prithvīrāj as his son and successor. Thus he succeeded, in due course, to the two powerful Rajpūt kingdoms of Delhi and Ajmer. Brave and courageous, he had shown his valour in numerous campaigns against the surrounding Rajpūt kingdoms. His famous abduction of Jai Chand's daughter from Kannauj during the course of *Soimbar*, made him the hero of Prithvīrāj Rāisa, a great epic by the graphic pen of Chand Bardāi which is still popular in the northern India. However, it seems history has not forgiven him for his final defeat against Muhammad Ghorī and condemned him as an inglorious sovereign despite his valour and adventurous campaigns. In the late 586 A. H. or 587 A. H., Muhammad Ghorī was defeated by Prithīrāj at Tarāin[2] (now known as Tilondi), 14 miles from Thānesar. In late 588 A. H., Muhammad Ghorī set out with an army of one lakh twenty thousand select horsemen to avenge

1. Seven miles from Ajmer lies Pushkar, a like of great sanctity, which is equalled only by that of Mansarowar. It is believed that here Brahma performed the *Yājna* and Saraswatī reappeared in five streams. (District Gazetteer of Ajmer, 1966, p. 736).
2. The name of the place has been given as Tarāori by certain historians.

the defeat. Prithvīrāj advanced with three lakh horses and three thousand elephants to meet the enemy. The immense array of horses and foot was marshalled under the foremost princes of Hindustān. A great fight ensued, the Rajpūts fought bravely but, at last, Prithvīrāj was slain with the best and bravest of Rajpūts. This also signalled the end of independent Rajpūt Kingdoms in India.[1]

A few years before the battle of Tarāin ended the sovereignty of the Chauhāns in 588 A. H., as some chroniclers claim, an incident had sealed the fate of proud and independent Ajmer. Prithvīrāj is said to have treated unjustly a Muslim (perhaps one of his courtiers). When the Khwāja interceded on behalf of the aggrieved man, Prithvīrāj contemptuously replied : "Since the time this man has come here, he is indulging in tall talk never expereinced or heard before by anybody." The Khwāja, on hearing the reply of Prithvīrāj, calmly said: "We have handed over Pithorarāj, alive and in chains, to Muhammad Ghorī." It was not long after this incident that the proud Chauhān was attacked and defeated by Muhammad Ghorī.[2]

The Saint and Preacher

Whatever may have been the sequence of events narrated by the historians, there is hardly any doubt that Khwāja Mo'īn ud-dīn had selected Ajmer as the centre for propagating Islam and radiating the message of love and spirituality, sometimes in between the campaigns of Muhammad Ghorī but before the latter had established his stronghold in that political and religious centre of medieval India. The Khwāja's decision bespeaks of his courage, determination and unflinching trust in God which are the hall-marks of great conquerors and founders of religions. His determined efforts coupled with his sincerity, reliance on God and ennobling sacrifice for his cause turned the country, steeped in the darkness of idolatry for thousands of

1. *Tārikh-i-Nasri*, I, p. 468 ; *Tārikh-i-Firishta*, I, p. 176
2. *Siar-ul-Aulia*, 147 and *Maāthar-il-Kirām*.

years, into a land of religious scholars and saints and made it a repository of religious knowledge and spiritual attainments. It was because of him that every part of this great country began to resound soon with the calls of *Allāh-o-Akbar* and was filled with the love-songs of the Qur'ān and *Hadīth* to the envy of the entire world of Islam. Verily, the world was moved by an illuminated soul.

The author of *Siar-ul-Aulia'* has correctly summed up the contribution of Khwāja Moin ud-dīn in these words: "Hindustan, to the end of its farthest southern limits, was a land of pagans and polytheists. Whosoever held power made the claim: 'I am the Lord, Most High.' The inhabitants of the land made almost every object and being a partaker of divinity. Stocks and stones, trees and beasts, cow and cow-dung were the things before which they prostrated. Darkened by the gloom of infidelity their hearts had been securely sealed. All were strangers to the faith in God and His ordinances, the Lord of the worlds and His apostles; neither anybody knew the true direction of God's religion nor had anyone heard the call that 'God is Great.' The moment Khwāja Mo'īn ud-dīn set his foot on this land, the dreariness of paganism gave way to the brightness of Islam. Thanks to his efforts and blessings, the relics of fetishism were replaced by the pulpit, the niche and the arch, and the lands ringing with the sound of idolatrous cults were filled with the cries of *Allāh-o-Akbar*. Whosoever would be blessed with true faith in God in this country and whosoever shall partake this wealth till the Day of Reckoning and their progeny as well as all those who will extend the bounds of true faith in this land shall go on increasing the merits and rewards of Sheikh-ul-Islam Mo'īn ud-dīn Hasan Sajazī."[1]

Another chronicler, Ghulām 'Alī Azād writes in Maāthar-il-Kirām: "There is not the least doubt that the spiritual mentors of *Chishtiyah* order have a rightful claim on India."[2] The

1. *Siar-ul-Aulia'*, p. 47
2. *Maāthar-il-Kirām*, p. 17

author of *Siar-ul-Aqtāb* says: "The blessed footsteps of Moᶜin ud-dīn dispelled the gloom of infidelity in the land and led to propagation of Islam."[1]

During the life time of Khwāja Moᶜin ud-dīn Chishtī the political capital of the land was transferred from Ajmer to Delhi. Ajmer, consequently, lost much of its prominence but the Khwāja remained at Ajmer and sent his disciple and spiritual successor, Khwāja Qutb ud-dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, to deputise for him at the capital. He gave himself up, during the remainder of his life, to prayer and meditation, teaching his disciples to govern their conduct according to the principles of the *Shaᶜrīah* and preaching the message of Islam to others. None of the numerous memoirs and biographies mention the details of his missionary activities except that his efforts were crowned with success and a vast multitude entered the fold of Islam on acconnt of him. In the words of Abul Fadhal "he took up his residence at Ajmer where he spread the light of faith and, because of his sublime life and preachings, legions after legions of people embraced Islam.[2]

Such was, then, the mission of the Khwāja to which he devoted himself for fifty years till his death at the age of ninety years in 627 A. H.[3] Khwāja Qutb ud-dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī had by then established himself firmly at Delhi where he was engaged, like his mentor, in revivifying and illuminating the hearts of a vast multitude of people. The then Sultan of Delhi, Shams ud-dīn Iltutmish, was also a devotee of the Khwāja whose moderating influence led the Sultan to dispense justice with an even hand and strengthen the roots of Islam in India.

Khwāja Bakhtiyār Kākī

Born in the town of Aush,[4] Khwāja Bakhtiyār Kākī became

1. *Siar-ul-Aqtāb*, p. 101
2. *Āīn-i-Akbarī*, Vol. II, p. 270
3. The year in which the Khwāja died is disputed by his biographers who have mentioned 627, 632 and 633 A. H. The authors of *Siar-ul-Aqtāb* and *Kazīnatul Asfiā* are agreed that the Khwāja died in 633 A. H..
4. A town near Farghana in the Trans-oxiana region.

an orphan at the tender age of one and a half years. His mother took special care for his education and got him admitted in a primary school at the age of five, where he received education from Maulānā Abū Hafs Aushī. After completing his education at Aush Qutb ud-dīn took the road to Baghdad where his fate brought him in contact with that pure-hearted soul who helped him to attain the highest form of spiritual existence and then radiate those luminous qualities in Hindustan. He was endowed the robe of spiritual succession of the *Chishtiyah* order by Khwāja Moʿīn ud-dīn in the sacred mosque of Faqīh ʿAbul Laith Samarkandī, in the presence of a large number of religious doctors and celebrated saints. He directed his course to India at the bidding of his mentor and stayed over at Delhi, capital of the nascent Islamic State in that country. The royal court at Delhi was, at the time, filled with poets, artists and scholars from many lands attracted by the Sultan's generosity, and had also men of arts and learning drawn from the realms over-run by Chenghiz Khan and his successors. This new metropolis of India had thus rapidly gathered the cream of talent from the entire world of Islam.

Khwāja Qutb ud-din was held in veneration by Sultan Iltutmish but he persistently refused to have anything to do with the royal court and rejected all offers of a fief or a grant from the King. First in Kilokhri, and then near the mosque of Malik ʿIzz ud-din, he continued to live like a mendicant although Sultan Iltutmish continued to pay occasional visits to him.[1] He became so popular among the masses that once when Khwāja Moʿīn ud-din came to Delhi to see his disciple, the then Sheikh-ul-Islam Najm ud-dīn Sughrā made a complaint to the Khwāja. Thereupon the Khwāja said to his disciple, "Bābā Bakhtiyār, so soon have you gained eminence that the servants of God have begun complaining against you? Leave this place and come to Ajmer, there I will be at your service."[2] The

1. *Tārīkh Firishta*, Vol. II, p. 720
2. *Siar-ul-Aulīā*, p. 54

Sheikh had said what could be expected of a man who had attained the summit of spiritual perfection. He did not like his disciple to be the cause of anxious concern to anyone, and not the least to the Sheikh-ul-Islam of the Islamic State. He had also hinted that if the people at Delhi were not aware of the stature and spirituality of Khwāja Bakhtiyār Kāki, he knew it very well and could accord him the highest marks of respect. Khwāja Qutb ud-dīn gave the reply expected of him, "My Lord, what of sitting in your presence, I hardly deserve to stand before you."[1]

The mentor asked the disciple to accompany him to Ajmer, and the disciple nodded his assent without a demur. But no sooner had the two come out of the city, it dawned upon the Sheikh that the popularity of his disciple was by the will of God. "Khwāja Qutb Ud-dīn started on his journey to Ajmer in the company of his Sheikh", records an annalist, "but the news of his departure raised a clamour in the city. The whole of its population along with Sultan Iltutmish came out of the capital to follow his steps wailing and lamenting over his departure."[2]

Khwāja Moʿīn ud-dīn did not consider it prudent to plunge into sorrow such a vast multitude for the sake of one man. He allowed Khwāja Qutb ud-dīn to return to Delhi and remarked: Bābā Bakhtiyār, you better remain here. That such a large number of people are sorrow-stricken at your departure, I do not consider it proper to rend their hearts. Go back, I leave this city in your charge."[3]

Sultan Iltutmish thanked the Sheikh for allowing Khwāja Qutb ud-dīn to remain at Delhi.

Back in Delhi Khwāja Qutb ud-dīn again took up his austere living and the task of diffusing the spirit of humanity

1. *Siar ul-Aulia* p. 54
2. *Ibid.*, p. 54
3. *Ibid.*, p. 55. What the Khwāja meant was that he should carry on the mission entrusted to him and continue to invite people of the Capital to the path of righteousness.

among his followers and devotees. He never had anything to do with the royal court. As an earnest seeker of truth he had renounced all wordly wealth and earthly desires; but the people still flocked to him as if "the whole world, all the notables of rank and authority deemed it an honour to pay respect to him."[1]

Sultan Shams-ud-dīn Iltutmish used to call upon him twice a week.[2] Delhi was then not only the capital of the Sultanate, but was also the emerging stronghold of Islam in a country recently brought under its realm, where many a sagacious mind of the then Islamic world had gathered. It was no easy task to provide spiritual guidance to all and also to exert a moderating influence over an otherwise autocratic form of government. Although Khwāja Bakhtiyār Kākī did not live long enough to complete the difficut task entrusted to his care; for he remained alive only four or five years after the death of his spiritual guide, he discharged his responsibility with supreme success and also established the *Chishtiyah* order in India on a firm footing for all times to come.

He was about fifty years of age when the all-consuming flame of the love of God, which he had kept subdued in his frail bodily frame for the edification of surrounding humanity, burst forth in ecstatic trances and transports. He was often seen in the state of total absorption and elevation produced by Divine illumination of his heart, till the day came when he heard in the chamber of Sheikh ʿAlī Sikizzi[3] a singer reciting the following couplet.

Ungrudging who are in resignation and submission;
A new life they get, ever and anon.

He fell into ecstatic trance; returned to his place after some time, but remained attracted to the same condition. He desired the same couplet to be repeated again and again until

1. *Akhbār-ul-Akhyār*, p. 46
2. *Tārīkh-i-Firishta*, Vol. II, p. 719
3. Also known as Sheikh Ali Sajasi, according to some historians.

four days passed in the same condition. In between, when the time for prayer arrived, he would perform the observance, but would again relapse into the same state of ecstasy and rapturous trance as soon as the couplet was recited before him. On the fifth night, in the same condition, he preferred the deeper privacy of the grave.[1] This incident is reported to have happened in the year 633 A.H.[2]

While returning from *ʿIdgāh* to his residence, a few days before his death, the Khwāja happened to pass through an open ground. He remained standing at the place for quite some time until a companion accompanying him politely reminded: "It is *ʿId* today and a large number of people would be awaiting your return." He replied: "I find the odour of hearts emitting here." Later he called for the owner of the land and purchased the field for his burial place. This is the place where his grave exists today.[3]

Khwāja Qutub ud-dīn had conferred the habit of succession to nine or ten of his disciples, but his chief successor who devoted himself whole-heartedly to the completion of the task undertaken by him was Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn Ganjshakar.

Khwāja Farīd-ud-dīn Ganjshakar

Khwāja Moʿīn ud-dīn Chishtī was indisputably the founder of *Chishtiyah* order in India, but it was promoted by Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn whose two disciples, Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn Dehlavi and Sheikh ʿAlāʾ ud-dīn ʿAlī Sābir of Kalyar spread it far and wide in the country.

The first name of the Khwāja was Masʿūd, the surname Farīd ud-dīn, but he is commonly known by the appellation of Ganjshakar.[4]

1. *Siar-ul-Auliāʾ*, on the authority Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn Auliāʾ.
2. Certain memoirs give the year as 634 A. H.
3. *Siar-ul-Auliāʾ*, (p. 55), on the authority of Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn Auliāʾ The place is now called Qutub Sāhib
4. *Lit.* Treasure-house of Sugar. It is difficult to say, with any amount of certainty, how Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn came to be known as Ganjshakar, for, different stories about it have been told by the writers.

His grandfather, Qāzi Shuʿaib, a lineal descendant of the second Caliph, had migrated from Kabul to Lahore because of the Tartar depredations. He stayed for a while in Kasūr and then settled in Kahenwāl where he was granted an estate and appointed as Qāzī. Farīd ud-dīn was born here in 569 A.H. When still young, he travelled to Multan, then a great educational centre of the country, for higher education. In Multan he studied under different teachers among whom was also Maulānā Minhāj ud-dīn who taught him *An-Nāfeh*, the renowned book on juristic science. It was here in Multan that Farīd ud-dīn met Khwāja Qutb ud-dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī in 548 A.H. and immediately took an oath of allegiance to him. He also decided to accompany his Sheikh by terminating his education but the latter persuaded him to complete his studies first, which he did in India and abroad.[1]

After completion of his education, Farīd ud-dīn came back to Delhi where his Sheikh selected a place near Gaznī Gate for his stay. Here he busied himself with prayer and meditation. After he was gifted with spiritual enlightenment and illumination, he was permitted by Khwāja Qutb ud-dīn to stay at Hānsī, with one of his disciples Sheikh Jamāl ud-dīn Khatīb. When Khwāja Qutb ud-dīn died, Farīd ud-dīn was already at Hānsī. He reached Delhi on the third day of his Sheikh's death and was invested with the robe of his master's vicegerency by Qazī Hamīd ud-dīn Nāgaurī, as desired by the departing mentor. This was an indication that Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn should take the place of Khwāja Qutb ud-dīn.

It was the third day of Farīd ud-dīn's succession when an old acquaintance and follower, Sarhangā by name, came to see him. He was, however, not allowed to present himself before the Sheikh by his attendants. The man stayed there for a few days and when Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn happened to come out of his residence, he fell on his knees and complained that in Hānsī it

1. *Rāhat-ul-Qulūb*, a collection of his utterances, contains the details of his journeys, but the book being of spurious nature cannot be relied upon.

was not difficult for him to pay his respect to the Sheikh, but in Delhi, the poor like him could not gain an access to his presence. Farid ud-din took the complaint to his heart as a divine warning for the pomp and glory with which he had been surrounded. He also did not like the absence of peace and solitude at Delhi which he regarded as an impediment in the way of his journey to higher stages of spirituality. He, therefore, atonce decided to return to Hānsī. When it was pointed out to him that his spiritual guide and mentor had desired him to take his place; he replied: "My mentor had no doubt bequeathed his trust to me but whether I live in a city or wilderness, it shall ever remain with me."[1]

Khwāja Farid had selected Hānsī so that he might live there as a recluse, unknown and undisturbed. But Maulānā Nūr Turk, another disciple of Khwāja Qutb ud-din, told the people about his spiritual status and they began to crowd round him here too. Khwāja Farid left for his home town Kahenwāl, a town near Multan, but his fame having travelled faster than him he had to move on to Ajodhan.[2] Khwāja Farīd's eminence did not, however, remain hidden for long even in Ajodhan where the stream of visitors was often so long that he had to receive them till it was quite late in the night.

In the beginning he had not enough to live upon. A local wild fruit *Piloo* was brought to be boiled and salted which served as the meal for Khwāja Farid and his followers. But even during those days of extreme poverty, he was not the least less careful about the lawfulness of the food taken by him. Once, while he took a morsel in his hand to break his fast, he remarked: "There appears to be something wrong with it." The servant replied: "We had no salt. I borrowed a small quantity."[3]

1. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, p. p. 72
2. Now the place is called Pakpattan. It is situated in district Montgomery of Pakistan.
3. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, p. 66

Khwāja Farīd replied: "This is against my principle. Now it is not lawful for me to take this food." It was not long before that his initial indigence gave place to affluence. Then the servants had to keep the dishes ready all day for the incoming guests, from early morning till late in the night. Whoever wished could come and take food from his imperial kitchen.[1]

He was equally cordial to all, great and small. In the words of Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn: "In what a magnanimous and wonderful way he lived—that it was difficult to emulate. Whether one was an old friend or follower, living with him for years, or a stranger coming for the first time to see him, he would attend to all with equal kindliness of heart."[2] Maulānā Badr ud-dīn says: "I was his chief attendant. Normally he gave all instructions to me. With no veil of secrecy, he was the same in company or solitude. I never noticed anything contrary to it during several years of my companionship with him."[3]

Sultan Nāsir ud-dīn Mahmūd once came to see Khwāja Farīd at the head of a large army which was on its way to Uchh and Multan. The description of the vast multitude desiring to pay homage to the Sheikh on this occasion has been thus given by Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn: "The thronging crowd was beyond control. The attendants hung the sleeves of his shirt from a balcony to be kissed by the people. Very soon it was torn to shreds. At last the Sheikh came out to the mosque and asked his attendants to form a cordon round him so that people might pay their respect without mobbing him. People came, saluted him from a distance and went away. Suddenly, an old sweeper broke into the cordon and fell on the feet of the Khwāja saying, "Sheikh Farīd, are you fed up? You ought to offer thanks for this blessing of God." The Sheikh cried and expressed regret. Later he bade him farewell with presents."[4]

1. *Siar-ul-Aulıā'*, p 64
2. *Ibid.* p. 68
3. *Ibid* , p. 65
4. *Ibid.*, p. 79

On another occasion the Prime Minister Ghiyāth ud-dīn Balban called upon the Sheikh on behalf of Sultan Nāsir ud-dīn and presented some cash and a royal charter granting four villages to the Sheikh. The Sheikh returned the charter and distributed the cash among the mendicants.[1]

Ghiyāth ud-dīn Balban succeeded Sultan Nāsir ud-dīn. He was also devoted to Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn since he considered his accession to the throne as a reward of Khwāja's blessings and invocation for him. Still, the Khwāja always remained unconcerned and unsolicitous. A recommendatory letter which the Khwāja once wrote to Sultan Ghiyāth ud-dīn Balban for a certain person bears out how little he cared for the King. He wrote: "I present the affairs of this man first before God and then before you. If you come to his aid, the benefactor would really be God to whom you should be grateful: but if you do not; then you would desist by the will of God and no responsibility shall lie on you."[2]

Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn had the most cordial relations with other mystics of his time. Sheikh-ul-Islam Bahā' ud-dīn Zakaryā of Multān was an eminent spiritual guide and a Sheikh of *Suharwardiyah* order and also his contemporary.[3] The Khwāja had great regard and affection for him and always addressed him as *Sheikh-ul-Islam*.

The ruling passion of Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn's life was his ardent love and devotion to God which reflected his worthiness. His heart's immortal thirst for Divine propinquity inspired, guided and trained such other eminent mystics as 'Alā' ud-dīn 'Alī Sābir and Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn. The latter relates that once he saw Khwāja Farīd moving about with breathless impatience in his room and reciting some verses which meant:

"My only wish is to live smitten with Thy love;
Live if I must, beneath Thy feet, and crumble unto dust.

1. *Siār-ul-Autiā'*, pp. 79-80
2. *Akhbār-ul-Akhyār*. The letter had been written in Arabic.
3. Sheikh-ul-Islam Bahā' ud-dīn Zakaryā was born in 566 A. H. and Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn was three years younger to him.

Thee alone I desire in this world and the next,
Would that I live for Thee and die for Thee."

He recited the verses and then fell into prostration; after a while he would get up, move about in the room restlessly and again recite the same verses.[1]

The Khwāja possessed a tender heart which was easily touched by a devotional verse or ancedotes of the saints. Often he broke down into tears; always kept fast; recited the Qur'ān regularly; and instructed his disciples to follow his example in fasting and recitation of the Book of God.[2] He was also fond of musical recitations. Once someone remarked that the theologians disputed the validity of musical recitations. He replied: "Holiness be to God! One has been burnt and reduced to ashes but the other is still disputing its legitimacy."[3]

He spent his life as a solitary anchorite. Indifferent to the grandees and ruling chiefs, he had dedicated himself to the service of God like the earlier mystics of his path.

Sheikh Badr ud-dīn Gaznavī was a contemporary of Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn and a disciple of his Sheikh, Khwāja Qutb ud-dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī. He was on friendly terms with a certain grandee of the time who had built a monastery for him. It so happened that the particular patrician incurred the wrath of the king and with him Sheikh Badr ud-dīn had also to suffer certain hardships. He requested Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn to pray for him. The Khwāja wrote back to him. "Whoever shall tread the path you had chosen, he will surely invite trouble for him. You are a follower of the pure-hearted saints, then why did you get a monastery constructed for you against their traditions. This was not the way of Khwāja Qutb ud-dīn and Khwāja Mo'īn ud-dīn, nor had they ever paraded their wares in a monastery: they wanted to live unnoticed, unknown."[4]

1. *Siar-ul-Aulīā'*, p. 123
2. *Halāt-i-Sultan-ul-Mashā'ikh*, p 12
3. *Siar-ul-Aulia'*, p. 12
4. *Siar-ul-Arīfīn*, p 85

Because of his indifference towards the rich and the noble the Khwāja had to suffer privations, despite his increasing popularity, towards the end of his life. Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn says in *Siar-ul-Aulīā'*, "By the time he came to his journey's end, he was again in reduced circumstances. I was with him during the month of Ramadhān, when the food we had was insufficient for us. None of us took a hearty meal in those days. Everything in the household was of inferior stuff. When I took leave from the Sheikh to depart from there, he gave me a *sultānī*[1] for travelling expenses. Later on, he sent me a word through Maulānā Badr ud-dīn Is'hāq to postpone my departure for a day more. When the time arrived for fast-breaking, no edibles were available in his house. I went to the Sheikh and requested him to allow me to purchase some foodstuff from the money he had granted me earlier. The Sheikh gave me the permission and also invoked blessings of God for me."[2]

Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn goes on to describe the death of his Sheikh in these words: "On the fifth of Muharram his illness took a serious turn. He fell unconscious after performing the *'isha'* prayers. After a while when he regained consciousness he asked whether he had recited the prayers. Those present at the time replied in affirmative but he said: 'Let me repeat it again. Who knows what is going to happen.' Having performed the prayers he again fell in a swoon. Again on coming back to his senses, he repeated his earlier question but again said: 'Let me say the prayers again, for nobody knows what is to happen."[3] He recited the *'ishā'* prayers for the third time and then he shuffled off his mortal coil."[4]

Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn died on Tuesday, the fifth Muharram 664 A. H.[5] and was buried at Ajodhan. Sultan Muhammad

1. Probably the rupee of those days.
2. *Siar-ul-Aulīā'*, p. 66
3. *Ibid.*, p. 89
4. *Ibid.*, p. 89
5. The year of his death, commonly held as 644 A. H., does not appear to

[Footnote continued on next page]

Tughlaq later constructed a mausoleum over his grave.

The Khwāja was survived by five sons, Sheikh Nasr ud-dīn Nasr ullah, Sheikh Shahāb ud-dīn, Sheikh Badr ud-dīn Sulaimān, Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn and Sheikh Yaqoob and three daughters, Bībī Nastūrah, Bībī Fatimah and Bībī Sharīfah.

Among the spiritual successors of Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn, his third son Sheikh Badr ud-dīn and grandson Sheikh ʿAlāʾ ud-dīn were noted for their piety and saintliness. Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq was also a devoted disciple of Sheikh ʿAlāʾ ud-dīn. His descendants too included a number of pure-hearted souls who devoted their lives to preaching and inviting people through their precepts and example towards spiritual and moral purification.

be correct. Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn has mentioned several incidents pertaining to Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn, which happened in the year 669 A. H. It seems that he died in 670 A. H. as mentioned in *Khaz-inatul Asfia* on the authority of *Mukhbirul Wāsilīn* and *Tazkaratil ʿAashqin.*

II

Life Sketch of Khwaja Nizam ud-din Aulia[2]

Popularly known by his surname Nizām ud-dīn, he was named by his father Ahmad Ibn ʿAlī as Muhammad. Descending from a family of Saiyids which had migrated from Arabia to Central Asia, his grandfather Khwāja ʿAlī and maternal grandfather Khwāja ʿArab, who were also cousins, had come down to Lahore and thence to Budaun[1] where several other families of Iran and Khurasān noted either for their noble descent or godliness had settled down.

Early Education

Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn was born at Budaun in 636 A. H.[2]

1. Budaun is situated in Rohilkhand Division of Uttar Pradesh near the eastern bank of Sot River. In those days it was a populous town which became important as the northern frontier post of the then Muslim kingdom of Delhi (*Nazhatul Khwātir*).

 Captured by Qutub ud-dīn Aibeck in 1196, it remained a major provincial governorship under Shams ud-dīn Iltutmish. The ruined fort at Budaun is a witness of the importance it once had under the early Muslim kingdom. The imposing Jāmʿī Masjid was built here in 1223, under the patronage of Iltutmish, after whom his son Rukn ud-dīn Firoz Shāh also remained governor of Budaun before his accession to the throne.

2. The year has been calculated by the author of *Siar-ul-Auliā*[3] by deducting his age from the year when he died.

When he was only five years of age his father died. His mother who was known for her fervant piety, took pains for his proper education and moral guidance despite her appalling poverty. He received his education under Maulānā ʿAlāʾ ud-dīn Usūlī.[1] After Maulānā ʿAlāʾ ud-dīn Usūlī had taught him some elementary books on jurisprudence and a text-book named *Qudoorī*, he asked his disciple to bring a turban. Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn's mother somehow managed to purchase cotton and got it spun and woven into muslin for him.[2] She also invited some of the notable theologians and mystics of the time on the occasion. Khwāja ʿAlī, a disciple of Sheikh Jalāl ud-dīn Tebrezī placed the first coil of the turban round his head and all those present at the ceremony prayed for his spiritual development.

Uttermost Poverty

As an orphan who did not have enough to live upon, he had not un-often to forgo his meals. He related later on that whenever he had nothing to eat, his mother used to tell him that they were God's guests that day—a remark which was very pleasing to him. Once somebody sent some corn to his mother which sufficed for their meals for quite a few days. He states that he soon became so sick of it that he longed for the day when his mother would again announce that they were the guests of God. At last the day came when the gifted corn was finished and he was told by his mother that they had to rely on the hospitality of God. Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn says that the blissful satisfaction he derived that day from the intimation from his mother was beyond description.[3]

Impulsive Attraction Towards the Sheikh

Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn says: "When I was only twelve

1. Maulana ʿAlāʾ ud-dīn Usūlī was a disciple of Sheikh Jalāl ud-dīn Tebrezī. Like his Sheikh he led a frugal life and took care to hide his spiritual attainments.
2. *Sirāj-ul-Majālis* (Urdu Translation *Khair-ul-Majālis*), p. 222.
3. *Siar-ul-Auliāʾ*, p. 113

years of age, still studying lexicology under Abū Bakr Kharrāta (also known as Abū Bakr Qawwāl), a man who had been to Multan came to see my teacher. He began to narrate the virtues and excellence of Sheikh Bahā[1] ud-dīn Zakariya Multānī, the atmosphere of sanctity and godliness prevailing in his monastery and the enthusiasm and eagerness of the people around him for prayers and vigils which had made even the maidservants to pass their time in recollection of God. He went on with his narration praising the Sheikh but nothing of the description given by him awakened any response in my heart. Thereafter he told that from Multān he also went to Ajodhan where he met Sheikh-ul-Islam Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn, who could really be called a king of the saints. At once I felt a strong and absorbing attraction towards Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn.[1]

Studies at Delhi

Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn first came to Delhi at the age of sixteen years.[2] He spent three or four years in further studies at Delhi where were then some of the erudite scholars of the time. Sultān Nāsir ud-dīn Mahmūd then presided over the kingdom with Ghiyāth ud-dīn Balban as his Chief Minister. Maulāna Shams ud-dīn Khwārzamī, also known as Khwāja Shams ul-Mulk, held the office of *Mustaufi-ul-Mamālik*[3] but he was also a savant among the scholars of the time. He had taken upon himself, as was the custom in those days, the additional responsibility of teaching the students along with his onerous official duties. Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn was fortunate to get himself enlisted as one of his students. He soon became a favourite of his teacher who graciously permitted him, alongwith

1. *Siar-ul-Aulia*[1] p. 100 and *Fawā*[2]*id-ul-Fuvād* p. 149.
2. The age given in *Siar-ul-Aulia*[2] appears to be correct for the Khwāja spent three or four years at Delhi and then went to Ajodhan to become a disciple of Khwaja Farid ud-dīn. Then he was 20 years of age.
3. The Chief Auditor or the Accountant General of the kingdom.

two of his fellow students Qutb ud-dīn Nāqla and Burhān ud-dīn Bāqī, to take their lessons in his private apartment.

Whenever any student absented himself or was late, Khwāja Shams ul-Mulk used to remonstrate them simply by saying: "What was my fault that you did not come," or he jokingly remarked: "Let me know my mistake so that I may not commit it again." But Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn says that Shams ul-Mulk never complained whether he was late or absent. He always insisted on Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn to come and sit with him in his own chamber.[1]

A Brilliant Student

Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn was a studious and brilliant student. He occupied a distinguished place among his class-mates as an eloquent orator and a skilled debater. His proficiency in reasoning the points cogently earned him the title of '*Mahfil Shikan*' or the breaker of debates.[2]

Maqāmāt Harīrī—a book of stylistic elegance composed in rhymed prose—was included in the curriculum in those days. Normally the students used to study it like other books of literature and learnt to explain its difficult passages. Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn, however, learnt forty of its chapters by heart. Later on, when he realised the futility of his effort, he committed to his memory *Mashāriq-ul-Anwār*, a famous compilation of Traditions to make amends for his mistake.

He studied *Hadith* from Sheikh Kamāl ud-dīn Zāhid (d. 684 A.H.),[3] a noted Traditionist of his time and a disciple of Allāma Hasan ibn Muhammad as-Saghānī, (d. 650 A.H.)[4] the author of *Mashāriq-ul-Anwār*. In *Fiqah* or Jurisprudence, he was fortunate enough to study under Allāma Burhān ud-dīn

1. *Fawāʾd-ul-Fuwād*, p. 68
2. *Siar-ul-Auliāʾ*, p. 101
3. *Ibid.*, p. 101
4. Besides *Mashāriq-ul-Anwār*, a famous text-book on Traditions, he also wrote *Al-Ubāb-uz-Zākhir*, one of the most reliable and authoritative works on lexicography.

al-Marginiānī who had written the *Hidāyah* of world fame. Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn also studied *Mashāriq ul-Anwār* from the latter who granted him a certificate for teaching it to other.[1]

Mental Disquietude

Like an assiduous student Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn paid full attention to his studies. He wanted to achieve distinction as a man of letters, but he also felt a choking disquiet in his heart: it was not the product of any apathy or lethargy but an anxiety born out of his solicitous nature desiring something else which could make him calm and composed. The pedantry of the bookish knowledge he was acquiring as also the verbal wranglings over theoretical issues filled him with disgust. Once he remarked: "As a young man I used to associate with my companions but I always felt an aversion, a desire to avoid them all and longed to forsake their company. Although my friends were students and academicians engaged in literary pursuits but often I felt agitated and told my friends that I would not remain with them for long and abandon them." In reply to a question by Amīr Hasan ʿAlāʾ Sajazī he said that he had these feelings before he met Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn.

The mother of Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn died when he was still in Delhi.[2] Once he mentioned about the death of his mother and wept so bitterly that it became difficult to follow what he said. Lamentingly he recited the verse:

Alas! no device could avail me then,
Nor could I chain the night of tryst.

The Khwāja says: "Once after sighting the new moon, I went to salute and pay my respects to my mother. She replied, 'Whom would you pay homage next month?' I at once knew

1. The certificate which has been quoted in *Siar-ul-Auliāʾ* is dated 22nd Rabʿī-ul-Awwal, 679 A. H. This, in other words means that Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn was 43 years of age at that time. It also shows his eagerness to continue his further education till an advanced age,
2. *Fawāʾid-ul-Fuwād*, p. 47

that her death was drawing near. Dejected, I began to weep and I asked, 'Mother, to whose care do you entrust me'. 'Tomorrow shall I answer your question', she replied and bade me to spend the night with Sheikh Najīb ud-dīn. I went away but before dawn next day a maid-servant came running to announce that the mother wanted me at once. I enquired if she was all right. She replied in the affirmative and I hastened to my mother's side. She said, 'Yesterday you had asked me something. Now listen to me carefully.' Then she asked for my right hand and holding it in her hands said : "O God my Lord, I entrust him to Thy care.' After that she closed her eyes and bade farewell to this fleeting world. I thanked God for the reply given by my mother for I would not have been so well-pleased if she had left the house filled with rubies and gold than the reply she had given to my qnestion."[1]

An Unfulfilled Wish

At a time when the stories of the gifts and honours bestowed by the royal court on accomplished scholars, doctors and jurists were in everyone's mouth, it was not strange that the young Khwāja aspired, with his learning and straitened circumstances, for a lucrative post of rank and authority. It was but natural for a man who had tasted the pangs of hunger, despite his spiritual yearnings, to look forward to material comforts, honour and riches. He asked one day Sheikh Najīb ud-dīn Mutwakkil to pray God that he should become a Qāzī. Sheikh Najīb ud-dīn, however, kept quiet at his request. He repeated his request again for he thought the Sheikh had not listened to to him. Thereupon the Sheikh replied, "Don't be a Qāzī. Become something else."[2]

First visit to Ajodhan

Sheikh Najīb ud-dīn Matwakkil was the brother of Khwāja

1. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, p. 151
2. *Fawāī'd-ul-Fuwād*, p. 28

Farid ud-din. Nizām ud-dīn had already developed a feeling of great reverence for Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn while still a boy at Budaun. His introduction to Sheikh Najīb ud-dīn, with whom he spent some of his time, inflamed his fascination for Khwāja Farid. He made up his mind to repair to Ajodhan.

Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn has himself given an account of his first meeting with his spiritual mentor. He says that no sooner than was he ushered in the presence of Khwāja Farid, he recited a Persian couplet which said :

"Thy separation set my heart in flames blazing,
And the soul was ravaged by the flood of thy longing."

Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn wanted to express his keen desire to meet the Sheikh but he found his tongue chained to his pallet by the awe of Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn. Finding him overwhelmed with emotion, Khwāja Farīd remarked : "Every newcomer is overtaken by awe."[1]

Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn showed special favour to Nizām ud-dīn and ordered a cot to be provided for him in the guest house. Nizām ud-dīn, however, hesitated to sleep on a cot at a place where numerous respectable persons, learned scholars and divines who had committed the Qur'ān to their bosom had spread their beddings on the ground. When this was conveyed to Maulānā Badr ud-dīn, who was charged with the care of the guests, he sent him the word : "Have you to follow your own whims or abide by the instructions of the Sheikh?" Nizām ud-dīn replied, "I shall do whatever the Sheikh desires." He then instructed him to sleep on the cot.[2]

Nizām ud-dīn took the oath of fealty to Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn. He was then 20 years of age.[3]

Further Education

It seems that Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn had still certain text-

1. *Fawā'd-ul-Fuwād*, p. 31
2. *Siar-ul-Aulia'*, p. 107
3. *Ibid.*, p. 107

books to study when he went to Ajodhan. The path he had chosen for himself required that he should now strive to attain that perfect knowledge of God which was the great purpose of his journey or, indeed, the very object of one's existence. The formal education he had so far was nothing more than a disconcerting experience for a sensitive and awakened soul. If he had devoted himself so long to his studies as a necessity and preliminary step to lead his wandering soul onwards, it now seemed doubly difficult for him to continue the pursuit of formal education when he had reached the fount of knowledge. He had, however, chosen a Sheikh who was himself an accomplished scholar with a heart illuminated by the certitude of Divine knowledge. He considered it necessary that every traveller seeking the path of mysticism should acquire a certain degree of formal education, for he had himself been instructed by his spiritual mentor in that wise. There was another reason too. The Sheikh had a prognostication of Nizām ud-dīn's outstanding gifts of a seer and teacher which he had to utilise later on for the guidance of the people.

Therefore, when Nizām ud-dīn sought the permission of Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn to terminate his studies in order to devote himself exclusively to devotional exercises, he replied, "I do not like anybody to terminate his studies. Do both, continue your studies as well as the recitations and prayers and see which engages your attention more." He also said, "The mendicant has to have some knowledge too."[1]

As a mark of special favour to Nizām ud-dīn, Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn himself started teaching him. "Nizām, you would have to study certain books under me," said he. Six chapters of Sheikh Shahāb ud-dīn Suharwardī's *ʿAwārif-ul-Maʿārif*, and the *Tamhīd* of Abū Shakūr Sālmī were taught by him to Nizām ud-dīn. He also instructed his disciple about the rules of recitation of the Qur'ān and guided him in the recital of the first six parts of the holy Scripture.[2]

1. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, p. 107
2. *Ibid.*, p. 106

Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn could never forget the charming way in which Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn had taught him. He often used to say that the deep and hidden meanings of the mystic truths explained to him by Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn could never be explained by anybody else. "I often wished", said Nizām ud-dīn later on, "that it would be better if I die listening to his discourses."[1]

A Lesson in Self-effacement

The copy of *ʿAwārif-ul-Maʿārif* from which Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn taught Nizām ud-dīn was old and crumbly and written in a crabbed hand. While Khwāja Farīd had once to pause for a few seconds to make out the writing, Nizām ud-dīn innocently remarked: "I have seen another copy with Sheikh Najīb ud-dīn Mutawakkil. It was a correct one." "I don't have the energy to correct this one", was the reply of the Khwāja which he repeated many a time. Nizām ud-dīn says that at first he did not understand what his teacher meant but when Maulānā Badr ud-dīn Is'hāq told him that the Khwāja was expressing displeasure at his remark, he was confounded. Taking off his cap, he fell on the feet of his mentor and implored his forgiveness. Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn says that he repeatedly requested the Sheikh to pardon him but his annoyance did not abate. At last he got up, and knowing not what to do, he spent two days sorrow-stricken and disheartened. He even thought of committing suicide by jumping into a well but good sense prevailed on him. At his wit's end, he sped away to a nearby forest where he wept bitterly at his mistake.

Shahāb ud-dīn, one of the sons of Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn, was on intimate terms with Nizām ud-dīn. He informed the Khwāja of the lamentable condition of his friend. At last the Khwāja forgave Nizām ud-dīn and permitted him to return to his presence. On the next day he told Nizām ud-dīn: "I had done this for your betterment. The *Pir* (Spiritual guide) is like

1. *Fawāʾid-ul-Fuwād*, p. 75

a decorator of his disciple." Thereafter he invested Nizām ud-dīn with a robe of honour.[1]

A Decisive Movement

It was undoubtedly a critical moment for Nizām ud-dīn when his spiritual mentor reacted in a sharp and sudden manner over his innocent remark. Verily, it would appear that the Khwāja need not have shown such a resentment over the simple remark that Nizām ud-dīn had seen a better copy of the book with his brother—a statement of fact which was neither wrong nor violated any moral precept. But the Khwāja could not tolerate even this harmless comment by his disciple for he had already chosen him as his future spiritual successor. It was, therefore, necessary for him to teach that disciple a lesson in self-effacement in a way that should destroy even the least vestiges of self-conceit and vanity in him. He had also to take him through that state of anguish and grief, dejection and down-heartedness which every path-finder of the love of God has to experience at one time or the other. But, the occasion was also crucial for a young, educated and intelligent youth since his whole future depended on a correct decision at that decisive moment. The assessment of the situation by Manāzir Ahsan Gīlānī is undoubtedly correct, who says: "It was the time when the genuineness of his yearning had to be tested. The world wanted to know his decision—whether he would remain a mere 'debate-breaker' and a logician as thousands had been before him or he would prove himself worthy of becoming the sultān of seers and mystics. It really depended on his courage

1. *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, p. 27. One should not misunderstand the motive of Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn or that his indignation was a violent and vindictive emotional outburst for a petty fault. The spiritual guides adopt different methods for generating a sense of self-effacement and self-abasement in their disciples. The severe test to which Ka'ab ibn Mālik was put by the Prophet of Islam for an unintentional error furnishes another example of the different methods adopted to train and guide a person.

and will as a poet has said :

"To be content with buds but few, thou wert a fool ;
Enough to fill thy blou, garden had floscule."

"He cast away the few buds that he had and decided to own the entire garden. Had he been shallow-headed, he would have reasoned thus : 'What was, after all, my fault ? I committed no wrong. I knew of a better copy and mentioned it to the Sheikh ! Then, why this fit of anger ?' Had he taken to this line of reasoning he would have prolonged it to a length greater than the promptings of the Devil. He would have been led to the conclusion that the old man had lost his balance of mind or that he was blinded by his own glory. He could have even proved the action of his teacher as a clear transgression of the ethical norms taught by the Prophet. But he knew that he had gone to the Sheikh to remedy his own defects and not to point out the faults of his mentor. He knew that the Khwāja was his physician and therefore he had no right to question his teacher's method of treatment."[1]

A Friendly Advice

Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn says : "While I was at Ajodhan, one of my old class-mates came there. Grieved as well as surprised to see me in rags, he said. 'What have you made of yourself, Nizām ud-dīn ? Had you taken to teaching in any city you would have become an accomplished scholar and made a fortune'. I offered my excuse to him but when I went to the Khwāja he at once remarked : 'What would be your reply, Nizām ud-dīn, if one of your friends happens to meet you and asks why are you wasting your time here like this and why have you given up the profession of teaching which would have been a stepping stone for your prosperity ?' I said, 'I will say whatever you advise.' 'Whenever anybody raises that question,' said he, 'tell him :

'Thou art not a wayfarer of my path, Off you go ;
Peace be to you, let me be humbled and low'.

1. *Nizām-i-Tᶜālīm*, Vol. II, pp. 94-95

"Thereafter he ordered me to take a tray of food from the monastery's kitchen to my friend on my head. I did as I was bidden. When my friend saw me coming like that he hurried to take off the tray from me. When I told him what had happened, he replied, 'I never knew that your Sheikh had guided you to such dizzy heights of selflessness! Take me to him.' After he had taken his meals, he asked his servant to carry the tray back but I refused and insisted on taking the tray back on my head as I had brought it. We both went to the Khwāja and he became his disciple."[1]

Nizām ud-dīn went thrice to Ajodhan.[2] It is, however, not known when he was himself allowed to take disciples in the *Chishtiyah* order. None of the chroniclers has mentioned the year of the visit when he was granted the habit of succession.

Blessings by the Khāwja

Once the Khwāja called for Nizām ud-dīn after Friday prayers.[3] He put his saliva in the mouth of Nizām ud-dīn and bade him to learn the Qur'ān by heart. Thereafter he said, "God has bestowed upon you the good of this world and the world beyond. This is what one can obtain here." The Khwāja then asked him to go to Delhi. He said: "Go and capture Hindustan.'

It has been stated in *Siar-ul-Auliā'* that Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn wrote a *khilāfat-nāmah* in favour of Nizam ud-dn and asked him to show it to Maulnā Jamāl ud-dīn in Hansī and Qāzī Muntajab in Delhi. The Khwāja also remarked: "You would

1. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, pp. 139-40
2. *Fawāi'd-ul-Fuwād*, p. 42
3. The date mentioned in *Siar-ul-Auliā'* is 25th Jamada ul-Ula, 669 A. H. but this appears to be wrong. It should be 664 A. H., the year of Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn's demise, as mentioned elsewhere in *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, or, we would have to agree with *Khazinatul Asfiā* which gives the year of his death as 670 A. H.
4. *Siar-ul-Aulia'*, p. 123

be like a shade-tree beneath which the people would get rest and repose. Give yourself up to prayer and fasting in order to lead your soul on the pathway of purity."

Request of a Prayer

Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn also requested his Sheikh, on the first of Shʿabān, to pray for him so that he might not have to depend upon the people. Khwaja Farīd ud-dīn accepted his request and prayed for him.[1]

On another occasion Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn told Nizām ud-dīn: "I have prayed to God to confer on you something of the world also." Troubled to hear this, for, many a people were led astray by it, Nizām ud-dīn showed signs of distress. Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn, however, assured him, "For you the world shall not be a temptation. Rest assured."[2]

From Ajodhan to Delhi

After taking leave of his spiritual guide Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn took the road to Delhi on his sacred mission of guiding the people and purifying them of their evil and immoral traits. But he was then a poor wayfarer on his way to the renowned capital of the most powerful Muslim kingdom in the seventh century after *Hijrah*, whose only equipment for this formidable task was trust in God, sincerity and utter indifference to the world and everything it stands for. Manāzir Ahsan Gīlānī has given a beautiful description of Khwaja Nizām ud-dīn's journey to Delhi in these words: "Now he sets out from Ajodhan to triumph over Delhi, the capital of Hindustan, where innumerable gods have arrayed themselves from highest of the high to the lowest of the low; there are amongst them those on whose orders heads roll on the ground and also those who confer riches and glory on their meanest servitors. Ranks and honours are being distributed freely; pleasures and fortunes are being

1. *Siar-ul-Auliāʾ*, p. 123
2. *Ibid.*, p. 132

given out with both hands. And, this king of the saints is well up in all those arts and learnings which are required to feather one's nest. You have already seen that before coming to Ajodhan, he was known as a 'debate breaker' in the educated circles of Delhi. He finds all the doors from the office of a Qāzī to that of *Sheikh-ul-Islam* or *Sadar-i-Jahān* opened for him. But the love of the Creator has been so deeply embedded in his heart that it has expelled the longing for every worldly gain. It was this sublime quality of heart which he often described in these words : Nobody's faith is complete unless the whole creation is to him not worth the camel's dung.[1]

"Once somebody told Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn of a certain person who devoted himself night and day in prayers at Damascus just for achieving the office of *Sheikh-ul-Islām*. The Khwāja, his eyes brimming with tears, replied : 'Burn *Sheikh-ul-Islāmī* first and then the monastery and last of all your own ego.'[2]

"In fine, he left Ajodhan after consigning to flames all the worldly longings and desires.....and arrived in the capital empty handed where he had to rule as a spiritual monarch."[3]

Fulfilment of his Obligations

Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn relates that his Sheikh had directed him to always fulfil his obligations and never keep anybody displeased with him. The Khwāja had purchased some cloth from a cloth dealer at Delhi for which he owed 20 *Jitals*[4] to him and had also to return a book lost by him to one of his friends. When he reached Budaun, on his way back to Delhi from Ajodhan, he made up his mind to satisfy these obligations first. Accordingly, on reaching Delhi he laboured hard for a few days and as soon as he had saved 10 *Jitals* he approached the cloth

1. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, p. 551
2. *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, p. 23
3. *Nizām-i-Tcālīm*, Vol. II. p. 150
4. Jital or Chital was a copper coin.

dealer. He gave him the money he had with him and promised to return the remaining amount as soon as possible. The cloth dealer took the amount given by the Khwāja but remarked: "It seems you are coming from amongst the Muslims. I forego my claim for the remaining sum."

Thereafter the Khwāja went to the man from whom he had taken the book on loan and told him that since the book had been lost, he would prepare another copy of it for him. He also gave up his claim but observed: "It was only natural for you to do so after visiting the place you are coming from."[1]

In Delhi

When the Khwāja returned to Delhi, it was a populous and expanding city but for quite some time, till he took up his residence at Ghiyāthpūr he had no proper abode. He had so frequently to change his habitations that, it seems, he could not manage to have even a hut where he could live in peace. Mīr Khurd relates the story of the Khwāja's dwelling places in those days in the words of his father Saiyid Mahmmad Mubārak Kirmānī:

"So long as the Khwāja lived in the city he had no house of his own nor he tried to have one for him. When he came from Budaun, he rented a house in Sarāi' Miān Bazār which was also called Namak ki Sarāi'. Amīr Khusrū then also lived in the same locality. After some time, on the recommendation of Amīr Khusrū, he was allowed to live in the house of his maternal grandfather Rāwat 'Arz.[2] He lived in this house for two years. The house was situated near Mandh Gate and Mandh Bridge by the side of the city's outer wall. It was quite a good building of stately structure with spacious chambers but when the sons of Rāwat 'Arz returned, the Khwāja had to vacate the house. He had nothing except books with him which we carried on our heads to a mosque in front of Sirāj Baqqāl. On the next day,

1. *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, p. 14
2. Also known as Imādul-Mulk

a disciple of Sheikh Sadr ud-dīn, Sʿad Kāgzī by name, took the Khwāja to his own house and lodged him in the upper apartments. Khwāja remained there for a month and then got a house in the Sarai of Rakābdār near Qaisar Bridge. After some time he took up his residence in the house of Shādī Gulābī, near the shop of Muhammad, a fruit-seller. In the meantime, the sons and relatives of Shams ud-dīn Sharāb-dār[1], who were devoted disciples of the Khwāja begged him to occupy a portion of their own house. He lived there in peace for several years."[2]

Frugal living

When the Khwāja arrived at Delhi, he had to face those sufferings and tribulations which have to be endured by all those who are elevated and illuminated and desire to show the path of virtue to others. This was the time when Delhi was rolling in the wealth pouring from the four corners of Hindustan. Everything was so plentiful and cheap that two seers of bread could be had for one *Jital* and a maund of musk-melon for just two *Jitals*. But the Khwāja had to pass his days in such a state of extreme poverty that occasionally he could not provide even a loaf of bread for himself and his dependants. Nor could he afford the luxury of enjoying a musk-melon although it was so cheap! But not only reconciled to his frugal living he even longed to pass on his days in that wise.[3]

Once when he was residing in the house near Mandh Gate, he had to go with empty stomach for a few days. At last, a student who was aware of it informed some of his neighbours who were weavers by profession. They brought some edibles for him but while he was washing his hands to take the food, some one remarked: "God may bless the student who told us about you." "What did he say"? enquired the Khwāja. "He informed us," the man replied, "that you had nothing to satisfy

1. The royal servant appointed to provide drinking water to the king.
2. *Siar-ul-Auliā*, p. 108
3. *Ibid.*, p. 108

the pangs of hunger for quite a few days. That is why we have brought it to you." "Excuse me then," said the Khwāja and refused to take it in spite of their insistence.[1]

Death of His Sheikh

Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn paid the last visit to his Sheikh, Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn three or four months before the latter died. The Khwāja says: "He died on the fifth of Muharram but he had sent me back to Delhi in the month of Shawwāl.[2] Since he had already been taken ill, he was not keeping fasts during Ramadhān. One day someone brought musk-melons, one of which I placed before him in pieces. The Sheikh took them and gave one piece to me. I thought of taking that precious gift even if I might have to keep expiatory fasts continuously for two months in lieu of breaking the obligatory fast on that day.. But he forbade me saying, 'Oh, No. The *Shar'ah* permits me but not you."[3]

"The Sheikh had me in his thoughts before he died", continues Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn, "for he said to those present: 'Nizām ud-dīn is in Delhi. I was also away in Hānsī when my Sheikh Qutb ud-dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī died.' The Sheikh also wept while saying this."[4]

Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn went to Ajodhan after the Sheikh had passed away. Maulānā Badr ud-dīn made over the Sheikh's robe, prayer mat and staff to him as desired by the Sheikh.[5]

In Ghiyāthpūr

It has been related in *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād* that the Khwāja did not like the din and clamour of Delhi. Once he saw a recluse busy in the remembrance of God at Hauz Qatlagh Khān. The

1. *Jawam'e ul-Kalām*, p. 296
2. In 664 A. H.
3. *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, p. 53
4. *Ibid.*, p. 53
5. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, p. 122

Khwāja asked him if he had chosen to live in the city of his own accord. He replied in the negative but added that although he wanted to go away, he could not somehow leave the place. Thereupon the Khwāja made up his mind to leave the city for Patiālī[1] where a Turk[2] lived in those days, or to go away to Bishnālah. He once went to Bishnālah and lived there for three days but could not obtain a residence to put up permanently there. Back in Delhi again he earnestly implored God to guide him to a place where he could have peace and repose. As the Khwāja relates, he heard a celestial voice directing him to go to Ghiyāthpūr although he did not then know where the place was. However, he took up his residence at Ghiyāthpūr which was then a quiet and sparsely populated place. When Kaikabād[3] selected Kīlokharī[4] for his residence, Ghiyāthpur was crowded with the royal chiefs and retinues. The Khwāja again thought of leaving the place. One day he happened to be present in the last rites of one of his teachers in the city, where a lean and thin but agreeably good-looking man had also come. No sooner than he came, he addressed the Khwāja with a couplet which meant:

You had to know, the day you were made a moon of goodly frame;
Cynosure of all eyes, on every tongue would be your name.

He also told the Khwāja that a man should first avoid becoming far-famed, but once he had come in the lime-light, he should try to prove himself worthy of it so that he might not have to lose face before the Prophet on the Day of Reckoning.

1. A town in district Etah
2. Amīr Khusrū
3. Sultān Mu'iz ud-dīn, Kaikabād, the son of Bughra Khān and grandson of Ghiyāth ud-dīn Balban, who ruled for three years from 686 A. H. to 688 A. H.
4. Sir Saiyid writes in *Athār us-Sanādīd*: "Mu'iz ud-dīn Kaikabād built a fort and named it Kilokharī in 685 A. H. The fort is no more now but a village of that name still exists near Humaun's tomb (p. 82).

The man then said to the Khwāja : "Is it at all virtuous to devote oneself to God's recollection only after retiring from the world ?" He wanted to impress that the remembrance of God along the walk of life needs a greater strength of character. When he had finished talking, the Khwāja brought some food for him, but he made no move until Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn resolved that he would not leave Ghiyāthpūr. Thereafter he ate a bit and went away.[1]

Popular Regard

Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn began to attract attention and esteem of the people during his stay at Ghiyāthpūr. Quite a large number of people started paying visit to him for moral and spiritual purification at his hand.

The chroniclers have not given the details when the rising popular regard for the Khwāja started to draw people to Ghiyāthpūr. It has only been stated by them that for a time after taking up residence at Ghiyāthpūr, he had to live from hand to mouth. During the hottest summer days he had to walk down to the distant Jam'ī Masjid. At last privation gave place to abundance : an elegant superabundance combined with lavish generosity which surpassed even the splendour of the Delhi durbars. Amīr Khusrū has aptly depicted the Khwāja's majesty in these verses :

A sovereign is he in mendicant's closet ;
Over the kingdom of heart runs whose writ ;
A prince, who has no sceptre nor crown ;
The earth beneath whose feet, the kings would covet.

A Bounteous Friar

Whoever came from far or near was allowed to pay his respect to the Khwāja who gave to the visitor some cash, a robe or a gift or whatever he had at hand. Everything brought to him as a present was gifted away by him : nobody ever returned

1. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, p. 129

empty-handed from him.[1]

Khwāja Nasīr ud-dīn *Chirāgh Dehli* relates: "It seemed that a river of riches flowed beneath his feet. People came from early morn till dusk or even late in night; those who brought the gifts were fewer than those whom he sent back laden with a largess; the Khwāja always gave more than whatever one brought in presentation to him."[2]

Always on getting up after the afternoon nap he used to ask whether the time for *'asr* prayer had arrived and whether someone was waiting for him.[3] He never liked that anybody should have to wait for him.

The more his fame and popularity increased drawing larger crowds to his doors, the more he became indifferent to the world and its attractions. Often he wept at the presents brought to him and tried to dole out everything at the earliest opportunity. Sometimes he would direct his attendants to distribute everything left with him to the needy and poor and heaved a sigh of relief when nothing remained with him. On Fridays, before the Khwāja left for prayers, all the stores and rooms of the monastery were swept clean to ensure that nothing remained with the inmates and disciples. The visit of any prince or chief or the announcement of a gift brought by them very often called forth the cynical remark from the Khwāja: "Why has he come to waste my time?"[4]

Indifference to Worldly Possessions

Amīr Hasan 'Alā' Sajazī relates that once when he happened to be present there, a certain noble sent a transfer deed assigning a grove, some agricultural land and other property to the Khwāja with a request to accept the same. The Khwāja smiled and remarked: "Now people will say that the Sheikh

1. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*
2. *Sirāj-ul-Majālis* (Tr. *Khair-ul-Majālis*), p. 310
3. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, p. 126
4. *Ibid.*, p. 129

has gone to see his grove or the crop. What have I to do with all these? None of my Sheikhs ever had any land or property."[1]

The Imperial Kitchen

The Khwāja kept fast ever and anon. But dishes of different varieties and tastes were always served up to the visitors, young and old, poor and rich, who were not only fed to their heart's content but also allowed to take home whatever they liked. The victuals served at the Khwaja's monastery were of the highest quality that the nobles and chiefs of the State found difficult to afford, and remembered long once they had tasted them. Quite apart from the spiritual regeneration of those who paid a visit to the Khwāja, his unbounded munificence and filling of the empty stomachs speaks of his bountiful generosity to the poor and lowly. Of the Khwāja's generosity Manāzir Ahsan Gīlānī writes:

> "Those who wag their tongue to sympathise with the poor in their table talks would hardly be aware that these very mystics of Islam were the connecting link between the rich and the poor. Their's were the courts which demanded tribute from the kings. Such was the royal court of the Khwāja that even Khizr Khān, the heir-apparent of the kingdom was his devotee. Tolls and tithes flowed to the coffers of 'Alā' ud-dīn Khiljī from every part of the country but he, too, had to pay an impost to this exchequer..... These very monasteries were the channels which conveyed the shares of the indigent and beggers to them. And this is what is meant by the adage: The property of a mystic is for the common good."[2]
>
> "These mystics were the bridge along which both the poor and the rich walked to understanding. Both presented themselves before the mystics in the same capacity—very many people had their needs satisfied through them.

1. *Fawā'iḍ-ul-Fuwād*, p. 99
2. *Nizām-i-Tᶜālīm*, Vol. II, p. 214

Of a fact, there was hardly a time when in every part of the then India the prophetic injunction—collect from the well-to-do and distribute to the poor—was not implemented by these pure-hearted souls. Wherever any mystic was held in esteem by the people of rank and authority, the poor always stood to gain by it."[1]

The Khwāja always joined in the repast with his guests but he seldom took anything except a bread or half with vegetables or a little quantity of rice. Often he remained sitting with others at the repast but took nothing at all.[2]

Disregard of the Royalty

From the very beginning the guiding principle of the *Chishtiyah* order in India had been to reform and regenerate the Indian Muslim society in accordance with the teachings of Islam but, at the same time, to remain unsolicitous of the royal favours. As earnest seekers of truth, the earlier *Chishtī* mystics had held fast to this golden rule as a sacred patrimony of their precursors and spiritual guides. From Khwāja Moʿīn ud-dīn to Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn, every mystic saint remained completely indifferent to the royalty which helped them to keep their mission clearly aloof from the political upheavals of the times. Numerous dynasties held the reigns of government and tumbled down but the sincerity and indifference to wealth and dignity on the part of these *sufī* saints allowed them to propagate their mission remitlessly over hundreds of years—and this was perhaps the reason for the wide popularity it gained among the masses.

Since the day Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn was nominated for the spiritual conquest of the country, seven kings adorned the throne of Delhi Sultanate; some of them were extremely haughty; others ruled with pomp and splendour; but the Khwāja never graced the royal court by his presence (except once when he was called upon to take part in a disputation

1. *Nizām-i-Tʿalīm*, Vol. II, p. 240
2. *Siar-ul-Auliāʾ*, p. 125

about the lawfulness of musical recitations), nor he allowed any king to pay a visit to him.

The Khwāja had still not achieved the eminence by the time of Ghiyāth ud-dīn Balban, so the latter did not take much notice of him. Muʿiz ud-dīn Kaikbād was too pre-occupied with hunting and amusements to pay any attention to him. Jalāl ud-dīn Khiljī was, however, the first King who was himself an accomplished scholar and connoisseur who patronised men of letters and talent. The Khwāja had also then reached the pinnacle of his fame. Jalāl ud-dīn Khiljī expressed his wish several times to be allowed to pay homage to the Khwāja, but the latter always turned down his request. At last, he planned with Amīr Khusrū to secretly visit the Khwāja without informing him. Amīr Khusrū, however, thought it imprudent to keep his Sheikh in the dark and he broke the news to him. The Khwāja immediately made up his mind to visit the shrine of his own Sheikh at Ajodhan. When the King came to know of it, he chided Amīr Khusrū for leaking out his secret, but Amīr Khusrū replied: "Displeasure of the King posed a danger to my life but that of the Sheikh would have laid open my faith to peril." The wise and generous King, that Jalāl ud-dīn Khiljī was, kept quite at this answer.[1]

Khwāja Put to Test

Sultān ʿAlāʾ ud-dīn Khiljī ascended the throne after his uncle Jalāl ud-dīn Khiljī. Lordly and arrogant by nature, this "second Alexander" of India was neither devoted to the Khwāja in the beginning nor bore any ill-will against him. But certain persons envious of the Khwāja tried to embitter the King against him. They told the King that the growing popularity of the Khwāja was fraught with danger to the kingdom. In order to test the sincerity of the Khwāja he wrote a letter requesting for prayer and his advice for conducting the administration, and deputed his son and heir-apparent Khizr Khān to

1. *Siar-ul-Auliāʾ*, p. 135

bear the letter to the Khwāja. When the letter was delivered to him, he took it in his hand but did not read it. Instead, addressing those who were then present, he said, "I pray for the King." Thereafter he added: "What have we, the mendicants, to do with the King. Like a recluse I have withdrawn to this corner to pray for the welfare of the King and the Muslims. But if the King should disapprove of it, I shall go away from here. God's earth is wide enough." Pleased with the reply given by the Khwāja, the King observed: "I already knew that the Khwāja is least concerned with the affairs of the kingdom, but malicious people wanted me to pick up a quarrel with him so that the country should go to ruin."[1]

The King apologised for the letter sent by him and expressed his devotion to the Khwāja. He also requested Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn to allow him to pay a visit to him but he replied: "The King need not come. I shall pray for him in his absence which is more efficacious."[2]

Sultān ʿAlāʾ ud-dīn Khiljī repeatedly made requests to see the Khwāja. When the King became more insistent the Khwāja replied: "I have two doors in my house. If the King enters from the one, I shall go out from the other."[3]

Sultān ʿAlā ud-dīn Khiljī, however, still continued to have the highest regard for the Khwāja whom he requested to pray for him whenever he had any worry or anxiety. Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn always solemnly beseeched God on behalf of the King on such occasions.

A historian of the time, Qazi Ziāʾ ud-dīn Barnī writes: "When Malik Naiʾb[4] had laid the siege of Warangal, the communications to Tilangana broke down and the Sultān could not get any news about his forces for more than forty days. The Sultān felt worried about the safety of his troops while certain

1. *Siar-ul-Auliāʾ*, p. 134
2. *Ibid.*, p. 135
3 *Ibid.*, p. 135
4. Malik Kāfūr

courtiers apprehended the possibility of some disaster or defeat as the cause of the disruption of communications from the front. One day, in a moment of despairing anxiety, the Sultān deputed Malik Qarā Beg and Qāzī Mughīth ud-dīn of Bayanah to convey his mental disquiet to the Khwāja. The King asked them to tell the Khwāja that since he was even more solicitous than him about the welfare of Islam and its adherents, he might let him know about the welfare of the army if his illuminated self had any prognostication about it. He also instructed his messengers to exactly report the reply given by the Khwāja. When the two courtiers conveyed the message to the Khwāja, he started relating the victories achieved earlier by the King and then added : 'But these are nothing as compared to those we expect in future'. The King was much pleased to learn the reply given by the Khwāja for he was assured that Warangal would have been captured by the time. The same day, after *'asr* prayers, the emissaries, sent by Malik Naib, arrived with his letter describing the success of his expedition. The letter was read out by the pulpiters after Friday prayers, the victory was announced by the beat of drums and the people in their happiness raised the strains of inward joy. This incident also increased the King's devotion and regard for the Khwāja."[1]

On another occasion, when the Mongols attacked India, the Sultān himself marched out, placing himself at the head of his troops, to drive back the invaders. He sent a message requesting the Khwāja to invoke divine succour at that critical moment. The Khwāja instructed all the inmates of his monastery to pray and himself earnestly entreated God for the victory of the Sultān. After a few days the news was received that the Sultān's valour had brought decisive victory to his arms and the invaders had fled in a rapid and disorderly retreat.[2]

One of the Sultān's courtiers, Qāzī Ziā' ud-dīn, relates that 'Alā' ud-dīn never spoke disparagingly of the Khwāja. Although

1. *Tārīkh Firoz Shāhī*, p. 333
2. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, p. 160

there were several persons who described the Khwāja's bountiful generosity and popularity in a manner calculated to arouse jealously in the King's heart but he never gave ears to them. The Sultān's regard for the Khwāja gradually developed into a respectful submission but he could never meet the Khwāja.

Qutb ud-dīn's Animosity

After 'Alā' ud-dīn had breathed his last, his second son Qutb ud-dīn Mubārak Shāh ascended the throne depriving the rightful claimant and heir-apparent Khizr Khān. Since Khizr Khān had been devoted to the Khwāja, Qutb ud-dīn Mubārak Shāh nursed a feeling of resentment against the Khwāja too which developed into hostility with the passage of time. Qutb ud-dīn built a new Jām'i Mosque which he named "Masjid Mīrī", and ordered all the theologians and divines of Delhi to perform the Friday prayers therein. Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn, however, refused to comply with the royal command, replying that he had a mosque near his house which had a greater claim upon him. This further enraged the King. The relations between the two were so strained that when the Khwāja once saluted the King, on coming across him in the shrine of Sheikh Ziā' ud-dīn Rūmī, the latter refrained even from exchanging the greetings. Another incident, however, provided the King with an opportunity to declare his foolish intentions which he might have concealed for long in his bosom. According to the custom followed in those days, all the grandees, officers and respectable citizens were required, on the first day of every lunar month, to present themselves before the monarch for salutation and presentation of gifts to him. The Khwāja, however, never went on these occasions but used to send his servant, Iqbāl, as his deputy. Feeling slighted by the proxy, the King ordered that none amongst his chiefs and officers should henceforth visit Ghiyāthpūr to pay respect to the Khwāja. Amīr Khusrū relates that the king even said: "Whoever would bring the head of the Sheikh, he shall be rewarded one thousand *Tankas*."[1]

1. The silver coin of the time.

The King publicly announced his intention: "If he does not turn up next time I would know how he comes." The King's intention perhaps was to have Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn brought to the court as a prisoner or he might have even decided to get rid of him once for all. The Khwāja was told of the King's resolve. But indifferent to the peril threatening him, the Khwāja remained quiet. One after one the days were running out. "The month began to draw to a close", says Manāzir Ahsan Gīlānī,[1] "and with it every well-wisher of the Khwāja began to worry himself sick. At last, the new moon was also sighted. Now everyone entitled to admittance before the King shall present himself before the morach on the coming day. But the Khwāja is still adamant and has decided not to visit the King, who, on his part, is also firm on his declared resolve: 'I would know how he comes.' Only the night is to pass for the day, dreaded by the citizens of Delhi, when the two Sultāns, one of the temporal world and the other of the spiritual realm shall clash their arms. The fateful night had still not folded up when the King's doom was sealed. Khusrū Khān[2] seized the King by the hair, the two grappled each other but Khusrū Khān succeeded in thrusting a dagger in the abdomen of the King who came crashing down to the ground. Khusrū Khān severed his head[3] from the body and flung it down into the courtyard of

1. *Nizām-i-Tʿālīm*, Vol. II, p. 230
2. Khusrū Khān, in whom the Sovereign placed implicit confidence, was a low caste convert to Islam. His acceptance of Islam was merely the cloak under which he concealed his deadly hatred of the faith and his determination to conspire against the King in order to gain the throne for himself.
3. The author of *Siar-ul-Auliā*' does not give the date when the king was beheaded. *Firishta* fixes the incident on the fifth of Rabʿi-ul-Awwal, 721 A. H. (Vol. I, p. 227) but at another place he gives the date as 29th Shawwāl (Vol. II, pp. 740-41). But greater reliance can be placed on Amīr Khusrū's *Tughlaq Nāmah* which was composed during the reign of Sultān Ghiyāth ud-dīn Tughlaq. It states that the incident happened in Jamāda-ūl-Ukhrā, in the night the new moon was sighted (p. 19).

the Imperial Palace of Thousand Pillars."[1]

The Mysterious Repast

During the period when Sultān Qutub ud-dīn had forbidden his courtiers to pay a visit to the Khwāja, spies had also been deputed by him to bring intelligence how the Khwāja managed his imperial kitchen after the cessation of all gifts and presents by the royal entourage. Sheikh Nasīr ud-dīn *Chirāgh Dehli* relates that "when the Sheikh was apprised of the King's order, he directed his attendants to increase the quantity of victuals cooked in his kitchen. After a few days the King enquired about the matter and was told that the quantity of food-stuff had since been doubled by the Khwāja." Surprised to hear the reply, he remarked; "I was mistaken. He seems to get his sustenance from unknown sources."[2]

Ghiyāth ud-dīn Tughlaq

During the brief period of his despotic rule, Khusrū Khān let no opportunity go by of insulting and ridiculing the faith which he hated at heart. In 721 A.H. Ghiyāth ud-dīn Tughlaq (Malik Ghāzī) marched upon the capital and established the Tughlaq dynasty after putting the usurper to sword. Ghiyāth ud-dīn was not a scholar but he showed due deference to the *Shāri'ah* and the doctors of religion. The Khwāja used to have sittings of musical recitations which had then become popular in the capital. A certain person named Hosām ud-dīn Farjām, who had been with the Khwāja for quite some time but had remained unenlightened despite the prayers and penance under-

1. *Qasr-i-Hazār Sitūn*, as it was named because of the large number of pillars utilized in its construction, was built by 'Alā' ud-dīn in 1303 A. D., on the place he encamped outside Delhi to give battle to the Mongol invader Targhi. The *Qasr* must have been as grand and beautiful as other buildings of 'Alā' ud-dīn, but unfortunately its complete destruction later on renders it difficult to locate its site with any amount of certainty.
2. *Khair-ul-Majālis*, p. 310-11

taken by him, was a trusted councillor of the King. Qāzī Jalāl ud-dīn, the Deputy Chief of State was also hostile to the mystics. The Qāzī and few other theologians prevailed upon Hosām ud-dīn Farjām to bring it to the notice of the King that the Khwāja's participation in these musical rhapsodies, deemed unlawful by Imām Abū Hanīfa, provided an excuse to others to indulge in and promote a practice prohibited by the *Shari'ah*. The King being unaware of the legal position in this regard, was amazed to hear that a scholar and divine revered by all could be accused of anything impermissible by the *Shari'ah*. A number of juristic opinions declaring musical recitations unlawful were produced before the King who agreed to convene a council to examine the correct legal position in this regard. The meeting was convened and the Khwāja invited to it, which has been thus described by Mīr Khurd: "The Khwāja was summoned to the Imperial Palace. He was accompanied by Qāzī Muhī ud-dīn Kāshānī and Fakhr ud-dīn Zarrādī, both of whom were erudite scholars. Qāzī Jalāl ud-dīn opened the proceedings with a sermon calling upon the Khwāja to desist from the practice. The way he addressed the Khwāja was not only unbefitting but he even proceeded to threaten him with punishment if he still persisted in looking upon it as a lawful practice. Indignant at the arrogant remarks of Qāzī Jalal ud-dīn, the Khwāja remarked: 'You shall be dismissed from the office which makes you brag your tongue.' And twelve days thereafter the Qāzī was dismissed and made to leave Delhi. In fine, all the scholars, jurists and theologians, and the King too, anxiously awaited the Khwāja to expound the correct juristic position in regard to the matter under discussion. Hosām ud-dīn Farjām levelled the charge that people whirled and danced and made loud excited utterances in the musical sittings held by the Khwāja. 'Dont make noise. Instead of continuing your allegations first define musical recitation,' demanded the Khwāja from Hosām ud-dīn. Farjām admitted that he did not know what constituted a musical recitation but added that the jurists held it unlawful. 'Then', replied the

Khwāja, 'I need not answer the charges levelled by a man who does not know what the issue is.' Hosām ud-din Farjām was thus .put to shame. The King gave ear to the speech of the Khwāja and forbade others to speak loudly or interrupt him. Among the scholars present in the meeting Hamid ud-dīn and Shahāb ud-dīn mostly kept quiet. The former, however, deposed that the description of the Khwāja's sittings of musical recitations, as given by Farjām and others were incorrect as he had himself attended these sittings as well as those held by other saints and friars..... In the meantime 'Alam ud-dīn, the grandson of Sheikh-ul-Islam Bahā' ud-dīn Zakariya Multānī arrived. The King asked him whether musical sittings were permissible or prohibited. He replied that he had discussed the matter at length in his monograph on the subject. It was lawful for those who listened to these recitations to warm the cockles of their heart for spiritual elevation but unlawful for those who wanted to gratify their senses. In reply to a further question asked by the King he said that in Baghdād, Rūm[1] and Syria the mystics attended these recitations but nobody ever raised any objection. He added that the practice was followed by the mystics even during the times of Junaid and Shiblī.

Jalāl ud-dīn implored the King to forbid musical recitations by a royal decree in order to uphold the juristic view held by the theologians of Hanafite school. Thereupon the Khwāja asked the King not to issue any edict on the subject. The King accepted the Khwāja's recommendation and did not issue any order.[2]

Qazī Zīā' ud-dīn Barnī writes in *Hasrat Nāmah* that when the Khwaja returned from the meeting he called for Muhī ud-dīn Kāshāni and Amīr Khusrū. He told them that the theologians and jurists of Delhi were filled with bitterness and envy; they gave vent to their indignation when they found an opportunity but it was surprising that they gave preference to the

1. Modern Turkey
2. *Siar-ul-Auliā'* (Summarised), pp. 527-32

juristic opinions of the Imāms over the Traditions of the Prophet. The Khwāja was grieved to find the theologians rejecting a Tradition merely because Imām Shafe'ī had relied upon it while their own Imāms had disagreed from him. At last the Khwāja observed: 'I had never seen a scholar who refused to give heed to an authentic Tradition of the Prophet. I do not know what is going to happen to the city? No city can flourish where a behaviour so outrageous can be tolerated. No wonder if this city goes to rack and ruin! Where the King and the nobles and the common folk hear the Qāzīs and the *'ulamā* asserting that they do not follow the Prophet's Traditions, how would they continue to have faith in them? I fear that the disbelief of the religious scholars of this city might invite the curse of Heaven in the shape of calamity and disaster, famine and pestilence."[1]

Destruction of Delhi

The fear expressed by Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn was not unfounded. Exactly six years after his foreboding, Muhammad Tughlaq, the son and successor of Ghiyāth ud-dīn Tughlak, suddenly issued a decree for vacating Delhi and migrating to Devagiri, renamed by him as Daulatabad. He enforced his order with such a haste and unreasoning obstinacy that the capital became desolate. In a city where formerly it was difficult to procure a house, no living being except wild beasts were seen. Muhammad Qāsim Bijāpuri writes in *Tarīkh Firishtā*: "The functionaries of the State did not allow a single inhabitant of the city, habituated to its climate, to remain there. They despatched everybody to Devagiri, and Delhi became so devastated and depopulated that no voice except that of the jackals, foxes and other wild beasts was to be heard there."[2]

All those theologians and jurists who had arraigned themselves against the Khwāja in the Imperial Palace had to leave

1. *Siar-ul-Auliā'* (Summarised), pp. 527—32
2. *Tārīkh Fīrishtā*, V. I, p. 243

Delhi alongwith others; many of them perished in the course of the long and strenuous march towards Devagiri; those who reached the new capital were destroyed by famine and pestilence and, thus, the grim prediction of the Khwāja came true within a decade.

Daily Routine of the Khwāja

The Khwāja used to come down from his apartment for *'ishā'* prayers. After performing the same with congregation, he would return to his chamber again where he spent some time in the recollection of God. Thereafter he took a little rest before the attendants handed over to him his rosary. Then nobody excepting Amīr Khusrū was allowed to see him. Amīr Khusrū used to sit down near his cot relating the topic of the day or other matters. The Khwāja often nodded his head to signify his assent or asked: "Turk, what is the news." This gave an opportunity to Amīr[1] to put two and two together and make it five. The Khwāja asked about something and Amīr utilized the opportunity to relate the whole story. Often the Khwāja also permitted the children or relatives to come and join the sitting at this hour.

Nocturnal Occupation

After Amīr Khusrū and others present at the time had taken leave to depart, the Khwāja's personal attendant Iqbāl used to bring a few jugs filled with water for performing ablution. Thereafter the Khwāja used to bolt the doors from inside and then nobody knew how he occupied himself to attain

1. The biographies as well as the poems of Amīr Khusrū speak volumes of his deep, quiet and enduring affection founded upon his attachment and esteem for the Khwāja. The Khwāja's kindly feeling for his disciple is disclosed by what he once said to Amir Khusrū: "I sometimes get tired of myself but never with you." (*Siar-ul-Auliā'*, p. 302). Another time the Khwāja told Amīr Khusrū: "A man asked me to lay my eyes upon him as I look upon you. I kept quiet but I thought of telling him first to prove himself worthy of it." (*Ibid.*, p. 302).

the propinquity of God or to what lofty stations he was raised by the Divine grace.

Sahūr

When the time came for *Sahūr*, the attendant used to tap the door. He brought dishes of different cooked victuals but the Khwāja took but a little of these and instructed to keep them for the children. Khwāja ʿAbdur Rahim, who was charged with this duty relates that sometimes the Khwāja ate almost nothing at *Sahūr*. When he was requested to take a bit more since he had eaten very little at the time of *Iftār*, he would break out into tears and say: "How many destitutes and poor would be lying hungry on the stairs and platforms of the mosques? How can I take all this when they are in such a great distress." The food brought to the Khwāja for *Sahūr* had very often to be taken back untouched by him.

In the Day

Those who saw the Khwāja in the morning found his eyes reddish by the night-long vigils but his face would be lit up with heavenly grace, as if by an indescribable happiness of inner bliss, without the least trace of weariness. Nobody could say that the Khwāja would have performed four or five hundred *rakʿats* of prayer in addition to the chantings in praise of God. Besides the inward illumination of his purified soul, the only occupation that employed him was consolation of the hearts broken by the turmoils of earth, than which there is no nobler task.

The Khwāja could be seen whole day sitting on the prayer mat of his spiritual guide absorbed in the ocean of Divine presence. A stream of visitors which included saints and scholars as well as persons of rank and authority continued all day. The Khwāja conversed with them but he also kept himself inwardly absorbed in the contemplation of Divine perfection.[1]

1. *Siar-ul-Auliāʾ*, pp. 125-129

After the Khwāja had performed the mid-day prayer, the visitors coming from outside were called in. His kind and comfortable words consoled the wearisome hearts and instructed them in the way of salvation. But nobody, not even the savants and the saved could dare to cast their eyes on the radiant countenance of the Khwāja.

End of the Journey

The Khwāja was over 80 years of age when he had a premonition that his journey's end was drawing near. One day he told his attendants : "I saw the Prophet in the dream. He said, "Nizām, I am anxiously waiting for you'."[1]

During his illness, the Khwāja gave out warrants of vicegerency to several disciples. These were drafted by Fakhr ud-dīn Zarrādī and copied by Saiyid Husain Kirmānī and finally signed by the Khwāja. The date given on these documents being the 20th Zilhijja, A. H. 724, these must have been written three months and twenty-seven days before the Khwāja breathed his last.

Some of the warrants were sent out to the disciples for whom they were meant. To others, the Khwāja granted them personally. First of all Sheikh Qutb ud-dīn Munawwar was asked to present himself. He was granted the warrant and a habit of vicegerency and told to offer thanksgiving prayer. In the meantime Sheikh Nasīr ud-dīn Mahmūd (*Chirāg Dehlī*) was also called in and awarded the robe and the warrant. Sheikh Qutb ud-dīn Munawwar was called again by him and both were told to congratulate and embrace each other. Then, the Khwāja said : "Both of you are brothers. Never mind who got the warrant first."

Forty days before the Khwāja shared the reward of heavenly kingdom, he attained the stage of total absorption and seemed overwhelmed by Divine light. Giving an eye-witness account of the Khwāja's condition before he passed on to his heavenly

1. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, p. 141

abode, Mīr Khurd says: "It was Friday. The Khwāja seemed to be immersed in Divine light. In the prayer he repeatedly prostrated as if yielding to the grandeur of the Supreme Being. In the same condition, he returned to his residence from the mosque. Tears continuously rolled down from his eyes, he occasionally passed on to ecstatic trances but after short spells he remarked: 'Today it is Friday. A friend recalls to his mind the promise made by the friend and gets engrossed in it.' In the same condition he often asked whether it was time for the prayers and whether he had performed it or not? If he was told that he has already said his prayers, he replied: 'Let me perform it again.' He continued to remain in this condition all through this period.

"Once he called for all the disciples and servants present in the monastery and said: 'All of you shall bear witness on the Day of Judgement that if Iqbāl has withheld anything, he shall be responsible for it before God.' Iqbāl replied: 'I have kept back nothing; everything has been given away.' The man had actually done so and distributed everything to the poor excepting some grains which would have sufficed for the inmates of the monastery for a few days. My uncle Saiyid Husain informed the Khwāja accordingly who angrily demanded from Iqbāl: 'Why have you kept back that rotten dust?' The Khwāja then ordered that the poor and the needy be called. When they had gathered, he said: 'Break open the store. Take away all the grain and sweep it clean.' In a few moments everything was carried away by the crowd.

"During the period of his last illness a few disciples and attendants asked the Khwāja: 'What shall be our lot after you?' He replied: 'You shall get enough to keep your body and soul together.' According to another report I heard from certain reliable persons, the Khwāja was asked: 'Who would be blest with luck amongst us?' They meant who would be the Khwāja's chief spiritual successor. 'Whosoever's luck should favour him', was the reply given by the Khwāja. Some of the friends and attendants requested my maternal grandfather

Shams ud-dīn Damghānī to tell the Khwāja that a number of his disciples who have built palatial buildings are desirous to know where the Khwāja would like to have his eternal resting place. The Khwāja, however, replied that instead of having his grave in one of these houses, he would like to be buried in an open space. Accordingly he was laid to rest in an open field where Sultān Muhammad Tughlaq later built a cupola.

"Forty days before the Khwāja died, he had left taking food.[1] During this period he hated even the smell of cooked victuals. Once he was offered a little soup of fish but he said: 'Throw it away in the running water.' My uncle Saiyid Husain once said to the Khwāja: 'Your honour has not taken anything for the last so many days. That would be harmful.' But the Khwāja replied: 'Saiyid, how could he relish food who is anxious to meet the Holy Prophet?' He not only took no food during these forty days but also spoke very little.

"At last in the forenoon of the eighteenth Rabī' ul-Ākhir, 725 A. H. this spiritual star shed its lustre for the last time and passed on to his heavenly abode.

"The funeral prayer of the Khwāja was led by Sheikh ul-Islam Rukn ud-dīn, son of the renowned saint Sheikh Bahā' ud-dīn Zakariyā of Multān. After the prayer Sheikh Rukn ud-dīn observed: "Now I know that for four long years I was detained in Delhi to have the honour of leading this funeral prayer."[2]

The Khwāja never married[3] and had no son but his spiritual sons in succession continued to keep alight the lamp of guidance in different parts of the country.

1. The aversion of the Khwāja could be described as an irresistible impulse of a man immersed in an exalted state of feeling and should not be taken as a rule or custom followed by other mystics.
2. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, pp. 152-158
3. Marriage is not an impediment to spiritual elevation, nor something looked down upon by the *Shari'ah* or by the mystics. The Khwāja's decision not to marry was, perhaps, because of his personal circumstances and bent of mind.

III

Character and Achievements

The gifts and talents of Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn were perhaps expressed most concisely as well as meaningfully, by his spiritual guide Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn *Ganjshakar* while conferring his vicegerency upon him. He had said : "God has bestowed upon you the gifts of knowledge, intellect and His love ; and anyone combining these qualities is best suited to discharge the responsibilities of a vicegerent."[1]

Sincerity of Purpose

The essence of his character which enabled him to carve out a pride of place not only amongst the saints and *sufis* of his own time, but also to become a loved and respected personality in the annals of Islam and to gain immortal fame was his wholehearted devotion and the love of God. His sterling sincerity had made this ruling passion of his heart the sole object of his earthly existence and expelled all other desires—the longings for wealth and glory, the love of the world and worldly desires.

"Hail, O Love that bringest us good gain—
thou art the physician of all our ills,
The remedy of our pride and vainglory, our Plato and our Galen.[1]

1. *The Mathnawī*, Vol. II, p. 6, Book I, (verses 23-24)

Love is that flame which, when it blazes up, consumes everything else but the Beloved.

He (the lover) drives home the sword of *Not* in order to kill all other than God: Thereupon consider what remains after *Not*.[1]

There remains *except* God: all the rest is gone.

Hail, O mighty Love, destroyer of polytheism.[2]

The whole life of the Khwāja was spent in the sweetest strains that cause one to forget one's own self in love divine and exert a stimulating influence over others to seek the sublime object of human existence. A sheikh[3] of the *Nizāmiyah* order has perhaps best expressed this very feeling of ecstatic rapture in these verses:

"Neither a devotee, nor a clerk in holy order,
Nor yet a *Hāfiz*, nor a zealous believer;
With all the ills that men endure, I would be a lover,
To be sorrow-sick in the sea of troubles, I would clamour."

Having attained the state of peaceful contentment, the Khwāja was always careful that all those disciples who were chosen by him to keep alight the lamp of his mystic order, expelled the liking for wealth and dignity from their hearts. Once Fasīh ud-dīn, a disciple, asked: "Who deserves to become the vicegerent of a spiritual teacher?" "One", replied the Khwāja, "who is not at all keen to become a vicegerent."[4]

Mīr Khurd relates that a reputed disciple of the Khwāja who had been granted the warrant of vicegerency by him, began to put on airs. The Khwāja became so displeased that when he again came to see him, the Khwāja refused to speak to him

1. Alludes to the Quranic verse (XXVII: 88) which says: "And cry not unto any other god along with Allah. There is no God save Him. Everything will perish save His Countenance."
2. *The Mathnawī*, Vol. VI, p. 38, (Book V, verses 588-90)
3. Muhammad ibn Qutub (popularly known as Shāh Mīnā) of Lucknow. (d. 874 A, H.).
4. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, p. 345

and revoked his permission to act as his vicegerent. The Khwāja forgave him only after he had expressed regret over his past behaviour.

Love for the Enemy

On his way to spiritual development, a devotee has to attain that stage of selflessness, renunciation and sincerity where his heart becomes free from all emotions of hatred and revenge and all desires to cause damage or hurt to anyone. He is then not simply humane and cordial to his friends but also develops a genuine kindliness of heart even for those who are hostile to him. In fact, he then supplicates for the prosperity and happiness of his enemies as if the hostility against him is a favour conferred upon him for which he ought to express his heart-felt gratitude.

Amīr ʿAlāʾ Sajazī relates that once the Khwāja remarked in his presence: "Whoever makes my heart bleed, would that God blest him more!" Thereafter the Khwāja recited a couplet which meant:

"Thorns who sows in my way out of ill-will,
May his flower of life blossom without a prickle!"

"A certain person whose name was Jhajjū", says Khwāja Nasīr ud-dīn, "lived in Hisār Indrapat near Ghiyāthpūr. For nothing he bore malice against the Khwāja and spared no effort to abuse and get him into trouble. When he died, the Khwāja not only attended his funeral but also offered two *rakʿats* of prayer on his grave and prayed thus for him: "O God, I have forgiven him for whatever ill he might have thought or done to me. Do not punish him on my accord."[1]

Once, some of his disciples told the Khwāja: "There are a few persons who accuse you publicly and even from the pulpit of the mosque. It becomes difficult for us to keep quiet on these occasions." The Khwāja replied, "I have forgiven all of them. You too should do the same and never pick up a quarrel with

1. *Siar-ul-ʿĀrifīn*

them." Thereafter he added, "If there is a feud between two persons, the surest way to put an end to it is that one of the two should dismiss the feeling of resentment from his heart. After all, why should anybody feel ill of being called names by another person. Does not the adage run: The property of the *Sufi* is a public trust and the spilling of his blood permissible to all! Then why should one quarrel merely for calling names?"[1]

The Khwāja used to tell his disciples that the practice followed by the commonalty was to be kindly to the good and to repay the bad in the same coin but the convention of the men of God was to repay even evil with a kind deed. Once he said, "If someone puts a thorn in your way and you too do the same, the whole path will soon be littered with thorns. A well-known proverb runs: Be a friend of the good and to the wicked a foe; but the custom of the mystics is to be kind to the friend as well as to the foe."[2] The Khwāja's motto was even still higher. He used to say: "It is bad to speak ill, but to seek ill is even worse."[3]

It is not difficult to conceive the loving kindness that a man with such a rule of conduct had for the descendants and relatives of his own Sheikh. The author of *Siar-ul-Ārifīn* relates that once Khwāja ʿAtaʾ Ullah, the son of Sheikh Najīb ud-dīn's daughter, asked Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn to write a letter to a certain grandee asking him to help ʿAtāʾ Ullah with some money. The Khwāja pleaded his inability on the ground that he was not at all acquainted with the chief nor had that man ever visited him. ʿAtāʾ Ullah got angry and gave loose to the tongue of slander against him. However, the Khwāja did not allow ʿAtāʾ Ullah to go away displeased with him and offered some money to pacify him.[4]

1. *Fawāʾid-ul-Fuwād*, p. 95
2. *Ibid.*, p. 87
3. *Siar-ul-Auliāʾ*, p. 554
4. *Siar-ul-ʿĀrifīn*

Concealing Other's Faults

Mir Khurd reports that the persons paying a visit to the Khwāja used to bring some present or sweets to offer as a gift to him, which were collected by the attendants and distributed among the visitors and inmates of the monastery. Once a religious scholar brought a packet of dust and put it alongside the gifts brought by others. He had presumed that the Khwāja, who never cared to know what was brought by whom, would not discover his ruse. After a while the Khwāja's attendant came to collect the gifts but the Khwaja asked him to leave that particular packet, saying: "Leave it here. This antimony is meant for my eyes." The theologian immediately apologised for putting him to test and enlisted himself among his disciples.[1]

Affectionate Kindness

Towards the humanity, at large, and the Muslims and those who were in any way connected to him, in particular, the Khwāja had such a deep and kindly feeling which, it would not be exaggeration to say, measured up to the affection of a mother for her children. Of a fact, all those who are perfect in faith inherit the Prophet's solicitude and care for the humanity thus portrayed in the words of God:

> "There hath come unto you a messenger, (one) of yourselves, unto whom aught that ye are overburdened is grievous, full of concern for you, for the believers full of pity, merciful."[2]

To be kind, gentle and considerate with others is really to follow in the footsteps of the Prophet who had been enjoined thus by God:

> "And lower thy wing (in kindness) unto those believers who follow thee."[3]

A kindly affection, deep, tender and constant, going

1. *Siar-ul-Aulia'*, p. 142
2. Q. IX: 128
3. Q. XXVI: 215

out to other human beings imparts such a feeling of oneness and spiritual affinity that the pleasure and pain of others is directly felt by the heart of the person developing such a tender affection. Amīr Hasan ʿAlāʾ Sajazī relates that once, in a gathering which was being addressed by the Khwāja, a few persons were sitting in the sun. The Khwāja stopped his discourse to say, "Brothers, come closer so that those sitting in the sun may get a place in shade. They are sitting in the sun but I am getting burnt."[1]

Once the Khwāja quoted some one, perhaps to refer indirectly to his own feelings, who had said: "God's creation takes food before me and I find it going down my own throat, as if I am myself eating the same."[2]

Amīr Hasan tells one of his own experiences. He once paid an untimely visit to the Khwāja. He had actually come, as he himself says, to see some of his relatives but he did not like to return without meeting the Khwāja even though it was an ill-timed visit. He went and told the Khwāja how had he come at a time ill-suited to him. The Khwāja replied, "You did well. Although the etiquette requires that one should not visit a Sheikh before *ishrāq* in the morning and after *ʿasr* in the evening, but I don't follow these rules. Anyone may come at any time he likes."[3]

Solicitude for Others

Those who have attained the stage of spiritual perfection expel all personal cares and anxieties from their hearts but the welfare of humanity always keeps them vexed and worried: like a friend who sticketh closer than brother, they are friend of all in the world.

Once a certain mystic said to Khwāja Sharaf ud-dīn[4] that Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn had no cares to trouble his mind, neither

1. *Fawāʾid-ul-Fuwād*, p. 91
2. *Siar-ul-Auliāʾ*, p. 77
3. *Fuwāiʾd-ul-Fuwād*, Vol. I, p. 98
4. Grandson of a famous mystic, Khwāja Nasīr ud-dīn *Chirāgh Dehli*

a wife nor children whose well-being could stir his heart or worry his head about them. Sharaf ud-dīn went direct from there to the Khwāja but before he could mention it to him, the Khwāja said: "Sharaf un-dīn, the choking disquiet I carry in my heart is of an intensity hardly felt by anybody else. Whosoever comes to me tells his problems which makes me extremely sad. He is really heartless who does not feel the pinch of his brother's worries. Verily the sincere are faced with dangers great! Now you can understand why those who are nearer (to God) remain astounded."[1]

To the Khwāja the greatest virtue which could help one to receive the Light-Divine was to cheer and please a believer and to mitigate his sufferings. Author of *Siar-ul-Auliā*[2] reports what the Khwāja once said: "In a dream I was given a book. It was written in it that as far as possible one should console the distressed; for, the heart of a believer is the repository of divine secrets. Some body has well said:

"Of the living beings, deaden the pain;
And have the day's bread for the poor and the forlorn."

On another occasion the Khwāja said: "On the Day of Reckoning nothing shall be more valued than the words, kind and comfortable, consideration and solace extended to the worried hearts."[2]

Attachment to Children

The Khwāja, amiable by nature, had a ready affection and kindliness for children. His pre-occupations with the visitors and devotional exercises left him little spare time, but he always found some time to cheer up the children. He took particular care to look after their requirements.

Raf'ī ud-dīn was the grandson of the Khwāja's sister. The Khwāja always awaited his arrival before he started taking

1. *Siar-ul-'Ārifīn*
2. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, p. 128

his meals no matter who was present at the repast. The Khwāja always took special care for his education and moral guidance.[1] Rafʿi ud-dīn was fond of wrestling, archery and swimming. The Khwāja chatted with him about these sports to gladden and encourage him.[2]

Often the young visitors came to the Khwāja smartly dressed which was disliked by the orthodox because of the airiness of such dresses. The Khwāja, however, never objected and received them courteously and endeavoured to guide them on the path of moral rectitude.

The author of *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, Mīr Khurd, says that once his uncle Saiyid Husain Kirmānī, who was then a young man, was fashionably dressed when he paid a visit to the Khwāja. The Khwāja, on seeing him, said politely: "Come on Saiyid, sit down here and share the benediction."[3]

The benign and winsome treatment of the young by Khwāja Nizam ud-dīn helped many a young men to shake off undue exuberance and gaity and take to righteous living and spiritual development.

The Khwāja's loving heart and sweet disposition had made his manners so amiable and pleasing that one is reminded of the findings of al-Ghazālī after years of wanderings to find the path of Truth and certitude of knowledge.

"I learnt from a sure source that the *sūfīs* are the true pioneers on the path of God; that there is nothing more beautiful than their life, nor more praiseworthy than their rule of conduct, nor purer than their morality. The intelligence of the thinkers, the wisdom of the philosophers, the knowledge of the most learned doctors of the law would in vain combine their efforts in order to modify or improve their doctrine and morals; it would be impossible. With the *sūfīs*,

1. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, p. 203
2. *Ibid.*, p. 203
3. *Ibid.*, p. 203

repose and movement, exterior or interior, are illuminated with the light which proceeds from the Radiance of Prophethood. And what other light could shine on the face of the earth."[1]

1. *Al-Munqidh*, p. 101 (Confessions of Al-Ghazālī, p. 54)

IV

Natural Affection

The pith and marrow of Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn's life and character, which illuminated his inner self and inspired his moral zeal, was the fervour of spiritual love arising from the harmony of his soul. The flame of this love which he carried in his self from the very beginning burst into a radiant glow in the practice of spiritual austerities under the paternal guidance of his Sheikh and guide Khwāja Farid-ud-dīn *Ganjshakar* and illuminated the environs of Delhi for more than half a century. The Khwāja's elevated soul which had reached the highest degree of sanctity, diffused the message of divine love to the four corners of the country and comforted innumerable roving spirits. His whole life, his conversations and discourses and his devotional and ecstatic practices point out unmistakably to the same infatuation and innermost warmth of divine love which has been thus described by Iqbāl :

"At last the flames burst forth from every hair of me,
Fire dropped from the veins of my thought."[1]

As related in the *Fawai'd-ul-Fuwād*, once the deathbed accounts of different mystics were being narrated before the Khwāja. Someone told the story of a sheikh who had the name of God on his lips while sinking in the jaws of death. On the

1. *Asrār-i-Khudī*, p. 68 (Translation by Nicholson, p. 145)

edge of tears, the Khwāja recited the verse which meant :

"Washing my cheeks with streaming tears ;
I set my foot to draw near ;
Union with Thee I ardently aspire,
Humming Thy name, I go to deathly slumber.[1]"

Such was the all-consuming love cherished by the Khwāja. It had expelled every other desire from his heart as some one has said : the heart's immortal thirst remained and the rest went up in smoke !

The joyful exhilaration of divine love kept the Khwāja always fresh and beaming with radiance in spite of night long vigils. Even when he had grown quite old, he continuously kept fasts and undertook exhausting devotional exercises but no trace of weariness could be seen on his face. He lived to the ripe old age exceeding eighty years, but even in that advanced age he was always brisk, cheerful and fresh as a daisy.[2]

Musical Recitations

But the flame of love also stirs the blood which then needs the soothing balm of lyrics sung in praise of God.[3] A heart inflamed by the love of God gets an opportunity to shed tears

1. *Fawā'd-ul-Fuwād*, p. 80
2. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, p. 128
3. Much has been written in favour and against musical recitations (songs unaccompanied by musical instruments) but the middle course appears to be that it is neither a must for devotional exercises nor absolutely unlawful. If recourse is taken to it with moderation and within certain limits, it acts as a means of spiritual upliftment. A well-known Sheikh of the *Chishtiyah* order, Qāzī Hamīd ud-dīn Nāgauri has shed light on musical recitations in these words : "I am Hamīd ud-dīn. I listen to these recitations and hold them lawful for the jurists have also held a similar opinion. I suffer from the pangs of love and musical recitation is a balm for it. Imām Abū Hanīfa has allowed the use of wine when in the opinion of a competent physician it is the only medicine to save one's life. My ailment too is incurable except with the auditions extolling the glory of God and therefore these are permissible for me but unlawful for you" (*Siar-ul-Aqtāb*).

and pacify its consuming passion through these recitations while the tiresomeness of exhausting devotional exercises is cast away by exhilarating love songs. This is the reason given by Jalāl ud-dīn Rūmī too in these verses·

Therefore *sam'a* (music) is the food of lovers (of God), since therein is the phantasy of composure (tranquillity of mind)

From (hearing) sounds and pipings the mental phantasies gather a (great) strength ; nay, they become forms (in the imagination).

The fire of love is made keen (inflamed) by melodies, just as the fire (ardour) of the man who dropped walnuts (into the water).[1]

Almost the same reason has also been given by the Khwāja in support of these recitals. He says:

"The musical recitations are for the seekers of truth, the faithful and the devotees who are given to arduous orisons and vigils. They have verily a right to soothe their agitated hearts and tired bodies (to regain the lost strength). The Prophet has said that 'your own body has a claim over you.' Thus, when the self is refreshed through these recitals, it again gets busy in its labour of love."[2]

Maulāna Kashānī, another authority on the subject, says: "Assiduous contemplations and exercises rewarded with ecstatic transports and illuminations often become burdensome to the traveller who feels a painful lack of strength resulting from the long and continued strain. This gives rise to alternate conditions known as contrition and radiance in his spiritual ascent. That is why the mystics of old have prescribed musical recitations—the melodies of harmonious voice—to retouch the spiritual vigour provided, of course, these do not overstep the limits set by the law."[3]

1. *The Mathnawī*, Vol. IV, p. 313 (Book IV, verses 742-74)
2. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, p. 198
3. *Misbāh-ul-Hidāyet*, p. 141

The mystics also maintain that these recitations help the traveller on his path and illumine and revivify his spirit.

The Khwāja, however, never took the musical recitations as an aid to or on indispensable part of devotional exercises. He occasionally took recourse to them simply as a spiritual nourishment. Delineating the essential requisites of a lawful recitation he says :

> "*Samᶜa* (musical recitation) is of four types, viz, lawful, prohibited, unbecoming and permissible. If the listener is inclined more to the Primal Being, the recital is permissible; if he is more attracted to a finite being, it is unbecoming; if he is exclusively absorbed in a mortal being, it is prohibited ; but it is lawful if the true love in which the listener is engrossed is none but Almighty God. Therefore, whosoever is fond of such recitations ought to be aware of these four categories.
>
> "For a lawful recitation there are few pre-requisites too. First, the songster, secondly the listener, thirdly, the recitation, and fourthly the musical instruments. The singer should be a grown up man, neither of tender age nor a woman ; the listener should hearken with his thoughts fixed on God ; the recitation should not deal with a subject ludicrous, frivolous or silly ; and finally, no musical instrument like a lute or violin should accompany the recitation."[1]

The Khwāja not only disliked instrumental music but also forbade its use by his disciples. Nor did he accept any excuse if any follower ever indulged in the unauthorised practice. The Khwāja was once informed that a few friars had attended and whirled in an audition employing instrumental music. The Khwāja said, "They did not do well. Whatsoever transgresses the limits of the *Sharīᶜah* is unlawful." When the Khwāja was told of the plea taken by the mendicants that in the ecstatic reverie they had so abandoned their selves that they became

1. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, pp. 491-92

completely oblivious of the musical instruments, he observed: "This is no excuse. This plea can be advanced for indulging in every vice."[1]

The Khwāja once told his disciples: "The use of musical instruments being a means of amusement is strictly prohibited. How could it be lawful when women in a congregational prayer are prohibited even to clap their hands in order to remind the Imām, if he commits a mistake in the recitation of the Qur'ān?"[2]

Ecstatic Transports

The Khwāja often used to say that a single verse was sufficient to move a man with unsullied heart to tears and ecstasy but nothing could exhilarate a spiritless fellow.[3] Whenever a verse praising God was recited before the Khwāja he was enraptured but in a way that nobody could notice it. During these rapturous states only tears used to roll down his cheeks.[4]

Mīr Khurd has quoted a few verses which, on different occasions, sent the Khwāja into ecstatic transports. He says that often a whole poem could not produce that rapturous exaltation which was caused by a single Persian or Hindi verse. Once a grandee, Amīr Qairbek, held a recitational sitting which was attended by several nobles and mystics. The songster sang the verse:

Hard put to toil I am, within my shanty home;
Give not tongue to my tale; let alone.

No sooner than the verse was recited, the Khwāja was carried away by a deep emotion and tears began to roll down his cheeks which set the whole gathering in a melting mood.

Another time, although the Khwāja was indisposed he was

1. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, pp. 520-21
2. *Ibid.*, p. 522
3. *Ibid.*, p. 522
4. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 514

sent into transport when Hasan Behdī recited the verse :

O without a figure indeed, Sa'adi thou art,
Too poor a catch where the trapped are pure in heart.

The recitation ended, and the Khwāja calmed down. But as soon as Amīr Hajī[1] began another ode of Amīr Khusrū, the Khwāja again dissolved in tears.[2]

Once Amīr Khusrū recited one of his odes whose opening verse was :

He stood unveiled to all, but asked me not to behold ;
Thrilled and lost, I knew not what his words contained.

The Khwāja gave a side-long look at Amīr Khusrū and then broke into tears falling into rapturous ecstasy.[3]

Whichever ode or verse produced the consuming emotion of ecstasy in Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn became instantly popular in Delhi as a household word.[4] It is related that Sultān 'Alā' ud-dīn Khiljī had given instructions to his courtiers to inform him of the verses which caused the Khwāja to fall in raptures. The King derived pleasure whenever these verses were related to him.

Recital of the Qur'ān

The inimitable symphony of the Qur'ān had always been the greatest source of delight to the sheikhs of *Chishtiyah* order who showed keen interest in its memorisation and recital. From Khwāja Mo'īn ud-dīn Chishtī to Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn, every Sheikh bade his disciples to learn, recite and study the holy Scripture.[5]

While vesting Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn with the robe of vice-gerency, his mentor had instructed him to commit the Qur'ān to his heart and the Khwāja fulfilled the wish of his teacher at

1. Son of Amīr Khusrū
2. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, p. 515
3. *Ibid.*, p. 516
4. *Ibid.*, 510
5. *Nizām-i-Ta'alīm*, Vol. II, p. 12

the earliest opportunity on reaching Delhi. Likewise, the Khwāja called upon his closer associates and disciples to do the same. When Amīr Hasan ʿAlāʾ Sajazī took the oath of fealty to the Khwāja, he was quite an elderly man, and poetry had remained his favourite pursuit throughout his life. The Khwāja instructed him to let the Qurʾān take precedence over his poetic zeal. Amīr Hasan ʿAlāʾ Sajazī says in *Fawāʾid-ul-Fuwād*: "I have repeatedly heard the Sheikh saying that the recitation of the Qurʾān ought to throw into shade the eagerness to compose poetry."[1]

When Amīr Hasan ʿAlāʾ Sajazī had learnt one third of the Qurʾān by heart, the Khwāja instructed him to memorise the Quranic verses in small portions and continue repeating what he had already learnt.[2]

Khwāja Muhammad had been placed under the tutelage of the Khwāja by his father Badr ud-dīn Is'hāq. The Khwāja got him to learn the Qurʾān by heart. He recited the Qurʾān so sweetly that the Khwāja appointed him to lead the congregational prayers.[3] Khwāja Mūsā, brother of Khwāja Muhammad was also a *hāfiz* as well as a *qārī*. Before the Khwāja began his meals the two brothers used to recite a portion of the Qurʾān by way of Table Prayer (*Duʿā-i-Maiʾdah*).[4] The Khwāja also got his daughter's sons to memorise the Qurʾān and used always to enquire about the progress made by them.[5]

Love for his Spiritual Guide

Every man inclined to be grateful has always a warm and friendly feeling towards his benefactor, but the Khwāja was affectionately devoted to his Sheikh who had guided and groomed him to attain interior illumination and spiritual

1. *Fawāʾid-ul-Fuwād*, p. 249
2. *Ibid.*, p. 93
3. *Siar-ul-Auliāʾ*, p. 200
4. *Ibid.*, p. 99. The prayers before meals is, however, not prescribed by the *Sharīʿah*.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 203

eminence. This devoted attachment always reminded him of Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn whenever any verse recited before him hinted at a person dear to one's heart. Once, when Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn was still alive, a songster recited the verse in the presence of Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn.

In this manner stroll ye not;
That evil eye one might cast.

The Khwāja says that the verse recalled to his mind the qualities and virtues, excellence and equipose of his Sheikh so vividly that he asked the songster to go on repeating the same verse for some time. Relating this story tearfully on a subsequent occasion, the Khwāja added with a sigh: "But, alas, it was not long after this incident that my Sheikh left this world.[1]

Watchful attention to Religious Observances

No matter how weak, indisposed or tired owing to strenuous exercises the Khwāja was, he was always extremely careful to perform obligatory prayers alongwith the congregation. It has been related in *Siar-ul-Auliā'* that "even when he had crossed his eightieth year he regularly came down from his apartment on the first storey for all the five congregational prayers along with the mendicants and disciples who happened to be present there. In spite of his old age and feeble body he fasted daily and ate very little."[2]

The Khwāja attached great importance to the *Sunnah* and always enjoined upon his companions and disciples to observe the practices of the Prophet with utmost care. Mīr Khurd has recorded the Khwāja's instructions to his disciples wherein he told them: "One should follow the Prophet's *Sunnah* steadfastly and staunchly and should never let go even the practices occasionally followed by the holy Prophet."[3]

1. *Fawā'id-ul-Fawād*, p. 96
2. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, p. 125
3. *Ibid.*, p. 318

The Khwāja considered it essential for every spiritual guide to be thoroughly well up in Traditions and the juristic laws so that he may neither act nor cause others to act against the practices of the Prophet.[1]

1. *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād,* p. 147

V

Learning and Spirituality

Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn had not only attained the state of exalted spirituality but had also acquired proficiency in religious sciences which he had studiously learnt from some of the eminent doctors of his time. He had studied literature and theology under Mustaufi-ul-Mamālik Maulānā Shams ud-dīn Khwārzamī, Traditions under Maulānā Kamāl ud-dīn Zāhid Muhammad ibn Ahmad Marīkalī and, finally, gone over some books under the guidance of Sheikh Farīd ud-dīn *Ganjshakra.* One of his teachers, Ahmad Marīkalī had received instruction from the author of *Mashāriq-ul-Anwār*, Sheikh Ahmad ibn Muhammad as-Saghānī.

Literary Pursuits

The Khwaja's disposition as well as the guidance of his *Murshid*—the spiritual guide—set him to seek the inner content of the religious observances in order to raise his religious experience to a higher plane of consciousness and purpose; still, he never lost his interest in intellectual and literary pursuits till his last breath. Mīr Khurd has mentioned in *Siar-ul-Auliā'* that Maulānā Rukn ud-dīn made out the copies of *Kashshāf* and *Mufassal* and a few other books for the Khwāja.[1] Both these books were written by the well-known Mu'tazilite doctor

1. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, p. 217

Mahmūd Jār ullah Zamakhsharī (d. 538 A. H.); the first one being on exegesis and the other on syntax, which speak of the literary interests of the Khwāja. The author of *Siar-ul-Auliā*[3] also relates that the Khwāja used to listen to the recitation of *Khamsa-i*[3]*-Nizāmī* by Saiyid Khāmosh ibn Saiyid Muhammad Kirmānī.[1] The famous Persian poet Amīr Khusrū, known as the 'Sugar Tongued Parrot of India' had the honour of being guided by the Khwāja in his poetic compositions. In the beginning Amīr Khusrū used to submit his poems to the Khwāja for correction and improvement. Once the Khwāja advised him to rhyme his verses in the style of Saphahānīs.[2]

Traditions and Jurisprudence

The speech delivered by the Khwāja in the court of Sultān Ghiyāth ud-dīn Tughlaq on the question of musical recitations illustrates his deep insight and extensive knowledge of the subject under dispute.

The six authoritative books of Traditions, known as *Sihāh-us-Sittah*, had not become prevalent in the northern India prior to Sheikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi (d. 1052 A. H.) nor were the doctors of religion then aware of the books comprising even the *Sahīhain*. *Mashāriq-ul-Anwār* and *Mishkāt* alone were then regarded as the two most authoritative dissertations on the subject.[3] Numerous apocryphal and spurious Traditions were then extant and freely used by the mystics and preachers as could be seen from their utterances preserved in the biographical literature of the time. The canons evolved for the acceptance or rejection of the Traditions were also not known to the religious scholars of the country before Muhammad Tahir Patnī (d. 986 A. H.) But the biographies and discourses of the Khwāja bespeak of his profound knowledge of the *Sahīhain* for he never argued on the basis of any disputed or unauthorised

1. *Siar-ul-Auliā*[3], p. 219
2. *Ibid.*, 301
3. For details see *Thuqāfat-il-Islāmiyah fil-Hind*

Tradition prevalent amongst the mystics of his time. Once, on being asked whether the saying: "A generous person is a friend of God even if he be an unbeliever" was a Tradition or not, the Khwāja replied: "This is an adage." The enquirer persisted upon saying that he had read it in a book on Traditions but the Khwaja replied: "Whatever is in *Sahīhain* is authentic."[1]

Significance of Knowledge

The acquisition and imparting of knowledge was highly commended by Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn; for, like the precursors of *Chishtiyah* order, he considered it an essential pre-requisite for those whom he commissioned for preaching and guiding the people on the path of spirituality.

An intelligent and capable young man hailing from Bengal, who later shined as Sheikh Sirāj ud-dīn of the *Chishtiyah* monastery of Pandwa, came from Laknauti with the intention of uniting in the bond of spiritual paternity with the Khwāja. After he had taken the oath of fealty, the Khwāja said to Maulānā Fakhr ud-dīn Zarrādī: "This young man seems to be capable but if he could also go in for learning, he would become a competent friar." Maulānā Zarrādī obtained permission to teach the young man for some time and very soon he was able

1 *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, p. 103. It may be mentioned here that the Khwāja was undoubtedly aware of the merit and worth of *Sahīhain* but the two books comprising it being then not included in the curriculum of Indian educational institutions, were generally not studied by the doctors of religion. Some of the Traditions cited by the Khwāja in support of musical recitations during the debate held by Sultān Ghiyāth ud-dīn Tughlak, are not to be found in the *Sahīhain*, nor are they considered of unimpeachable authority by the Traditionists. The speeches of the contending doctors in that debate show even greater ignorance of the science of Traditions. Ignorance of the *Sihāh-us-Sittah* and the canons framed for their evaluation had given rise to many un-Islamic practices in the monasteries of the then mystics of India. This, by the way, testifies to the great service rendered by the Traditionists of India in revivifying the true content of faith in the country.

to create in his disciple the desire for further education. After the Khwāja's death Sirāj ud-dīn continued his studies at Delhi before returning to his home town to diffuse the spiritual mission of the *Chishtiyah* order in Bengal and the eastern provinces.[1]

The Perfect Knowledge

The Khwāja being well schooled in the theological sciences was able to occupy himself fruitfully with contemplations and investigations of true knowledge concealed to all but those illuminated by the Divine grace. This comprehension acquired through intuition and inspiration is known by the mystics as the perfect or intuitive knowledge. The author of *Siar-ul-Auliā'* states that whenever any uncertainty pertaining to any question lingered unresolved, the Khwāja clarified the issue as if through his inner lustre which satisfied every mind. He always gave such a convincing reply that everyone was amazed and had to admit that such a reply could be given only by one endowed with the interior spirit of piety. Numerous scholars of the day and doctors of religion who were known for their opposition to the path of mysticism had ultimately to repent for their vainglory and enlist themselves among the disciples of the Khwāja.[2]

The Path of Sharī'ah

With his erudition coupled with the zeal to follow the way of the Prophet, the Khwāja had developed the sense which guided him to reject all the irreligious practices prevalent among the mystics of his day. The doctrines of the then *sūfīs* departing from the pure faith were never accepted by him howsoever sacrosanct they might have been considered by others.

A misguided belief then commonly held by the *sūfīs* was that *walāyat* or sainthood signified a stage higher than the

1. *Siar-ul-'Ārifīn*, p. 12
2. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, p. 130

prophethood, for, the former developed a continuous absorption in the contemplation of Divine Essence while the latter required a temporary recession from devoted attraction to God for purposes of preaching and imparting guidance to the mankind. Some of the mystic sects even went a step further to claim that every *walī* or saint was gifted with a higher spiritual merit than a prophet. Khwāja, however, never subscribed to these views and, as recorded by the author of *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, he observed: 'This is an irreligious belief.' Even though the prophets had to devote a part of their time to the guidance of humanity, a fraction of their devotion to the Supreme Being carried infinitely greater merit than the life-long absorption of the mystics in the love of God."[1]

Spiritual Development

A misconceived but popular notion about mysticism is that it requires renunciation of the world for it regards every mundane affair a snare and a glitter of the deceptive world which lets fall a veil of ignorance before the eyes of the attracted traveller. But the Khwāja had attained that stage of inward illumination which had lifted him above the external features of the devotional observances of the mystics and opened to his view the real significance of every act lawful in the eyes of the *Sharī'ah*. We are indebted to the collectanea of Khwāja Saiyid Muhammad Gesū Darāz who has quoted the observation of the Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn on the subject: "Nothing (made) lawful

1. *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, p. 120. Sheikh Ahmad Sarhindī (d. 1034 A. H.) commonly known as Mujaddid Alf-i-Thānī (the Renovator of the Second Millennium) has further elucidated the point that even when the prophets have to turn their attention to the human beings their interior self remains absorbed in the ocean of Divine wisdom more than the saints do during the period of Godly attraction. Explaining the reason for it he says that the prophets direct their attention to the human beings in pursuance of the Divine command to convey His message to the humanity and, therefore, no distinction can be made between it and absorption in the recollection of God.

(by the *Sharīʿah*) is a hinderance in the way of God nor cuts off the path of an attracted traveller, else it would not have been made permissible by God."[1]

Another time the Khwāja said, "You should be pure of heart and conscious of God in every action. After that you may engage yourself in whatever (lawful) occupation you desire for nothing will then harm you."[2]

Renunciation of the World

A clear and intelligible exposition of the reality of renunciation was made by the Khwāja in these words: "Renunciation does not mean that one should put off his clothes and don a loin-cloth. A man can dress properly and take food and also enjoy what is lawfully available to him but he should never try to store up these; nor should he entangle his heart in anything. This is the correct way of the renunciation of worldly desires."[3]

Kinds of Obedience

"Obedience (to God) is of two kinds," the Khwāja once explained, "obligatory and transilient. The obedience falling in the first category consists of those acts which benefit the person complying with a command as, for example, the prayer, fasting, *haj* and recollection of God. Transilient obedience is that which extends the benefit to others such as restoring harmony between the Muslims, showing consideration or benevolence to others. The obedience of the latter category is highly meritorious and shall have limitless reward from God. Absolute sincerity is essential for the acceptance of obligatory obedience but transilient obedience will be recompensed by God howsoever it is rendered."[4]

Miracles Worked by Saints

The miracles worked by the saints were held by the Khwāja

1. *Jawāmiʿe-ul-Kalām*, p. 160
2. *Siar-ul-Auliāʿ*, p. 160
3. *Fawāʾid-ul-Fuwād*, Vol. I, p. 7
4. *Ibid.*, p. 14

to be resulting from their total absorption and intoxication in the love of God. "They are attracted devotees," says the Khwāja about the saints working miracles, "whereas the prophets have a placid disposition and serene spirit. That is why, unlike the prophets, miracles become an obstacle for the mystics in their journey of spiritual development. On the other hand. the love of God imparts stability to the state of elevation.[1]"

Knowledge of the Prophets

The Khwāja classified knowledge into three grades viz. perceptive, intellectual and divine. We have perceptions through our senses such as the taste of different edibles or the various types of smells. The knowledge in regard to these is obtained through the senses. On the second grade comes the knowledge obtained through intellect. This is also of two kinds, acquired and intuitive. The Khwāja further explained that "even the intuitive knowledge is not divine, what to speak of acquired knowledge. Excepting those for whom the doors of divine knowledge are opened, who can say what its features are? Nobody who gains knowledge through his intellect, either by his own effort or through intuition can find his way to the divine knowledge although he can derive pleasure from his intellectual knowledge." In order to illustrate his point the Khwāja told the story of a certain saint who desired to record the manifestations of reality dawning upon his heart during the moments of ecstatic illuminations. In fact he wrote quite a lot to express his feelings but ultimately confessed that human language could not convey what he wanted to describe.[2]

Love of the World

Once someone said to the Khwāja: "There are some who love the world while there are others who hate it." "There are three types of persons," replied the Khwāja, "some cherish

1. *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, Vol. I, p. 33
2. *Ibid.*, p. 69

the world so much that they are always crazy about it and their number is quite large. There are others who not only hate the world but hold it in contempt and always sneer at it. There is also a third category, who neither hold it dear not detest it. They neither eulogize the world nor frown upon it and these are better than both the former categories." Thereafter the Khwāja told the story: "Once a man came to Rābiʿah Basrī and started denouncing the world. She replied: "Please do not come again to me. You seem to be so enamoured of the world that you are never tired of talking about it."[1]

Recitation of the Qur'ān

The Khwāja once told about the three ways or grades of reciting the Qur'ān. He said: "The first is that whatever you recite, its pith and substance sinks in your heart. The second grade of its recital is that your heart is awakened to the awe of God while the third grade is that your heart remains attracted to God so long as the recital continues."

"One should always be aware of the fact," the Khwāja continued, "that the recitation of the Book of God confers a blessing undeserved by him. But if that be not possible, one should at least keep in mind the rewards promised for the recital of the holy Scripture."[2]

As the Khwāja has himself acknowledged, he did not leave anything in writing[3] but his greatest productions were his spiritual sons, pure of heart and perfect in knowledge and demeanour, who were examples of rectitude, piety and truthfulness. However, Amīr Ḥasan ʿAlāʾ Sajazī and Mīr Khurd have narrated numerous sayings and teachings of the Khwāja which bear witness to his deep knowledge and incisive intellect.

1. *Fawāʾid-ul-Fuwād*, Vol. I, p. 189
2. *Ibid.*, p. 71
3. *Ibid.*, p. 45 and *Khair-ul-Majālis*, p. 51

VI

Blessings and Benignity

Before we unfold the story of Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn's remarkable achievement in enkindling the zeal for moral rectitude and spiritual uplift in countless hearts, specially at a time when the success of the Muslim arms had brought in its train the forgetfulness of God and given a free rein to self-indulgence, let us recapitulate the method evolved by the pure-hearted mystics to rejuvenate the religious vigour of the widespread Muslim population, as explained in the first volume of this book.

After the first few generations "religious seminaries and educational institutions too did not provide any answer to the problem because of the vast population of Muslims and the mundane pre-occupations of the people. The problem of making arrangements for a continued and concerted effort for the education and training of the people in religious tenets and practices, and infusing a breath of new life in the vast numbers spread over far off lands defied solution in the absence of a truly Islamic State. The foremost business or rather the end of the Caliphate was, in the words of Caliph 'Umar ibn 'Abdul Azīz, to guide the people in moral rectitude rather than to collect the revenues for the conduct of administration. The then Muslim States were, however, not only indifferent to this fundamental objective but were extremely allergic to any movement or criticism on this score which could pose a threat to their

political supremacy. Thus, these governments being suspicious of all efforts made for the resurgence of Islamic spirit, and, erroneously taking these as movements designed to build up political leadership, lost no time in crushing them.

"In these circumstances there was no way left to revivify the religious spirit and fill the people with an enthusiasm, zeal and self-confidence for reintroduction of the precepts of religion in their daily life. The only alternative left was to call upon the people to take an oath of allegiance for the purpose. Following in the footsteps of the Apostle of God, it had become necessary that a guide of spiritual and moral excellence should obtain an oath, or the *baʿit*, as it is called, from the people willing to offer sincere penitence and undertaking to lead a virtuous life in future in accordance with the directions of their mentor. If placing oneself under the instruction of an inspired guide meant that he was fairly started upon in his journey to the end of purification of spirit and moral rectitude; the oath of allegiance enjoined a much more onerous responsibility on the mentor himself. The guide or the spiritual teacher had to lead the wandering soul of the disciple taking the *baʿit*, stage by stage, from cleansing of his spiritual impurities, renouncing the love of worldly temptations and desires, wealth and honour, infusing an spirit of moral uprightness and correct ethical behaviour, following the teachings contained in the Qurʾān and the Traditions, to the illumination of the pupil's soul. This was, in truth, what the *baʿit* meant and by which the inspired souls tried to infuse into their disciples, through preaching and personal example, loving care and unalloyed sincerity, an inner vitality of spirit and strength of moral integrity. As the experience shows, the reformers and renovators of faith did succeed in revivifying the true faith and tapping new sources of popular strength in their own times, through this tried and infallible method which just copied the procedure and technique followed by the Prophet of Islam. Innumerable persons have been provided with an opportunity of not only adopting a virtuous life through this method but have also been led to attain even the stage of 'Divine

Acquaintance' and 'Love' by the inspired guides and teachers."[1]

Baᶜit : A Pledge and a Covenant

The *baᶜit* implies a determination to completely turn away from sin and to pattern one's life in accordance with the ordinances of God and His Apostle. None of his biographers has mentioned what the Khwāja required the intending disciples to say or promise while administering the *baᶜit* to them but the Khwāja has himself left an account of the manner in which his own Sheikh, Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn used to accept disciples in his spiritual paternity. Since the Khwāja had a deep and enduring affection for his spiritual guide and tried to follow in his footsteps, it can be assumed that he would have also acted similarly on such occasions. Speaking of his Sheikh, the Khwāja says :

"When anybody came to the Sheikh (Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn) with the intention of taking the *baᶜit*, he used to ask him to recite the *Sūratul Fātiha*[2] and *Sūratul Ikhlās*.[3] Then the Sheikh himself recited the last five verses of *Sūratul Baqr*[4] followed by the verse :

"Allah (Himself) is Witness that there is no God save Him. And the angels and the men of learning (too are witness). Maintaining His creation in justice, there is no God save Him, the Almighty, the Wise.

"Lo ! religion with Allah (is) the surrender (to His Will and Guidance)."[5]

"Thereafter he used to tell the disciple : 'You have taken the *baᶜit* on the hands of this weakling, on the hands of my Sheikh and his Sheikhs and on the hands of the Prophet, on whom be peace and blessings. And now you swear an oath to God Almighty that you would guard your

1. Saviours of Islamic Spirit, Vol. I, pp. 197-98
2. First chapter of the Qurʾān
3. Hundred twelfth chapter of the Qurʾān
4. Second chapter of the Qurʾān
5. Q. III : 18-19

hands, feet and eyes from the ways of sin and betake the path of *Sharī'ah* and the way (of life) chalked out by it."[1]

Wide Circle of Disciples

The Khwāja permitted everyone desiring to take the *ba'it*, to enter the circle of his disciples without putting him to any test or trial. The *ba'it* being a pledge and a covenant to follow in the steps of one's spiritual guide for the rest of one's life, a question might arise as to why the Khwāja administered the *ba'it* so easily to everyone. The Khwāja has himself given an answer to this question.

The well-known historian and author of *Tarikh Firoz Shāhī*, Ziā' ud-dīn Barnī, says that once he happened to remain with the Khwāja from early morning till a little before noon. During this period quite a good number of people took the *ba'it* on the hands of the Khwāja. It occurred to his mind that the earlier mystics used to be very cautious in taking disciples but the Khwāja perhaps allowed everybody to take the *ba'it* out of his generosity and largeheartedness. He says that he thought of asking the reason for it from the Khwāja but his doubt was revealed to the Khwāja by divine grace who atonce asked: "Maulānā Ziā' ud-dīn, you ask all sorts of questions but you have never asked me why I accept everybody as my disciple?" Taken aback, Ziā' ud-dīn touched the feet of the Khwāja and said that the doubt had struck his mind on several occasions and a few moments before he had thought of asking about it but God had revealed his secret to him. Thereupon the Khwāja replied:

"Divine wisdom endows every age with a singularity with the result that the characteristics, habits and manners of the people in every age, barring, of course, a few persons, differ from their predecessors. This is a matter of experience. The purpose behind the *ba'it* is that a disciple expels from his heart everything except God and gets

1. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, p. 224

absorbed in the vastness of Divine presence as you find it explained in the books on mysticism. The mystics of the old never accepted anybody under their spiritual paternity unless they were satisfied that the intending disciple had cleansed his heart of all earthly objects and desires. But Sheikh Saif ud-dīn Bākharzī, Sheikh Abū Saʿeed Abul Khair, Sheikh Shahāb ud-dīn Suharwardī and Sheikh Farīd ud-dīn accepted everyone desirous of spiritual purification under their surveillance. I do not lay a claim to the same spiritual excellence as those elevated souls had attained, but, I would like to explain why I do not take the same precaution as the earlier Sheikhs used to take. One of the reasons is that I have been informed by a large number of persons that good many of my disciples completely turn a new leaf, abstain from sins and begin offering prayers regularly. Some even devote considerable time in recollection of God. Now, if I were to make sure that they have completely disentangled their hearts from the worldly desires before I administer *baʿit* to them, they would be deprived of whatever spiritual uplift they attain through it. The other reason is that my Sheikh permitted me to take disciples without my asking for it or even entertaining a desire for the same. When I see a Muslim coming to me with bated breath, in all humility and submission to make repentance for his sins, I accept his statement and administer him the *baʿit*; for, I am told that many of them really abjure their evil practices after taking the oath of fealty."[1]

Reformative Endeavour

What was the effect of the discipleship of Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn, so generously extended to all, the nobles and the commoners, the officials and the traders, on the social and moral life of the people? Delhi was then the flourishing capital

1. *Siar-ul-Auliāʾ*, pp. 346-48; *Hasrat Nāmah*, p. 13

of a powerful empire whose pomp and pageantry had attracted all the means of amusement that wealth and power could purchase to divert the attention of the people from the path of piety and fear of God. The celebrated historian of that age, Ziā' ud-dīn Barnī, relates how the Khwāja was able to awaken deep religious longing to find God in every heart which guided the people to betake the path of virtue. He says:

> "The three luminaries of the mystic order during the time of 'Alā' ud-dīn Khiljī were Sheikh-ul-Islam Nizām ud-dīn, Sheikh-ul-Islam 'Alā' ud-dīn and Sheikh-ul-Islam Rukn ud-dīn. A vast multitude had pledged devotion to these spiritual guides. Countless people repented from their sins and turned from evil, took to prayers and devotional exercises, expelled worldly desires, covetousness and greed from their hearts and inculcated a deep religious yearning for the fellowship of God. The example set by these spiritual preceptors through their spirit of humanity, virtuous living and upright behaviour charged the atmosphere with a genuine religious spirit which helped the people to become truthful and genuinely religious. The piety and righteoutness of these God-moved souls attracted divine blessings; natural calamities like famines and pestilence ceased to visit the land, and, the Mongols, who were the scourge of the world, were brought to a shameful ruin. All these blessings, to which every man in the days of these three saints would bear witness, became a means for the ascendancy of Islam. The rules of the *Sharī'ah* as well as the doctrine of the mystics gained popularity among the people. How blessed were the last ten years of Sultān 'Alā' ud-dīn's reign when he had prohibited the use of all intoxicants and the ways of immorality and sensual gratification! ...On the other side, Sheikh-ul-Islam Nizām ud-dīn had opened wide the gates of spiritual preceptorship; encouraged the sinners to repent for their sins; and allowed all, the rich and the poor, the king and the slave, the learned and the illiterate to cleanse their souls through his

spiritual guidance. Everyone who pledged allegiance to the Sheikh considered himself spiritually attached to him and gave up many of his vices. If anybody ever committed a sin, the Sheikh allowed him to offer penitence and renew his *baʿit*. Thus, all those who took the pledge to walk along the pathway of purity were saved from many vices and were gradually led, through emulation of the Sheikh, to prayers and litanies. Every man and woman, whether tender in years or bent with age, regularly offered obligatory prayers and vied with each other in the performance of voluntary devotions. From the city to Ghiyāthpur, people had made arrangements for the wayfarers to take rest and offer their prayers. Machinations of the devil were eschewed by the people who took more interest in ascertaining the number of *rakʿats* performed on different occasions and the chapters of the Qurʾān recited in them by their spiritual mentors. Numerous people had enthusiastically taken to memorise the Qurʾān. A favourite pastime of the Sheikh's disciples was to instruct each other in the ways of mystic thought and practice and to relate the stories of those who had taken to a life of propinquity with God. They never talked of the earthly desires nor longed for power and pelf. Many among the attendants and servants, chiefs and grandees of the King who had been united in the bonds of spiritual paternity with the Sheikh, performed voluntary prayers and kept supererogatory fasts. There was not a city block or ward in which people did not hold regular gatherings for the remembrance of God, devotional practices or auditions. A number of the Sheikh's disciples recited the entire Qurʾān during the *trāwih* and kept vigil in the mosques during Ramadhan or even on Friday nights or on the occasion of other festivals. Many of them spent two-thirds of their nights in the nocturnal prayers of *tahajjud* all round the year and some even performed the morning prayer with the ablution they had had for the orison of *ʿishāʾ*. I know of a few disciples

of the Sheikh who had been blessed with miraculous powers under the spiritual guidance of the Sheikh.....Sultān ʿAlāʾ ud-dīn and his household members were devoted to the Sheikh. The nobles as well as the commoners had taken to righteous, ways. Transgression of the law like immorality, gambling, drunkenness and other vices were unheard of during the last few years of ʿAlāʾ ud-dīn's rule. People had begun to equate heinous sins with apostasy. No Muslim dared to charge interest or indulge in hoarding. The traders had given up the habit of bargaining, short-weighing and adulteration. Most of the students and disciples and numerous other people who kept company with the Sheikh had grown fond of studying mystical tracts like *Qoot-ul-Qulūb*, *Ihyāʾ-ul-Uloom*, *ʿAwārif*, *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb*, *Sharah Tʿarruf*, *Risālah Qushirī*, *Mirsād ul-ʿAbād*, *Maktūbāt-i-ʿAin-ul-Qadhāt*, *Fawāiʾd-ul-Fuwād* and *Lawaih wa Lawameh* which were in great demand in those days. Most of the people sought mystical treatises from the book-sellers. In fine, God had made Sheikh-ul-Islam Nizām ud-dīn a pure-hearted soul like Sheikh Junaid and Sheikh Bā-Yazīd of the bygone ages."[1]

The Love Mart

It was the time when the potent influence exerted by the Khwāja had brought a healthy change in the life of the people in every walk of life including even the inmates of the Imperial Palace of Thousand Pillars. Vanity and self-conceit, mental-disquietude and depression of spirits, the end-products of free living and self-indulgence had given place to the fervour of love-divine; the whole atmosphere seemed to be surcharged with the spiritual love which arises from the harmony of souls.

Mīr Khurd relates in *Siar-ul-Auliāʾ*: "Those were the days when everyone soaring to the higher domains of spirituality was drawn towards the tilting notes, harmonious melodies,

1. *Tārīkh Fīroz Shāhī*, pp 46 and 341

love-exciting tales and verses. Sincerity, humility, kindness and solace were the winsome qualities of the Sheikhs which made everyone bow his head in reverence to them."[1]

Training of the Disciples

Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn had taken special care to train his disciples who were to diffuse the yearning of eternal love far and wide. Through prayers and litanies, education and edification he guided his spiritual successors on the path of his mystic order. For those who possessed the capability but were not learned he arranged for their education, reproved those who were keen on debates and polemical disputations and prompted others who preferred penance and prayers to enter collective life and bear with equanimity the high-handedness and oppression of the people. He paid particular attention to each one of his disciples to prepare him for the great task of spreading piety and spiritual gifts and moral reformation of the people. He spared no pains nor allowed any obstacle to stand in the way of the mental and spiritual development of his disciples.

It has been stated in the *Siar-ul-Auliā*[2] that once "a few of his disciples, belonging to Oudh, decided to make a joint request to the Khwāja to permit them to have a debate on certain religious or juristic issues. These disciples being scholars, perhaps, wanted a little respite from the continuous prayers and remembrance prescribed by the Khwāja for them. Maulānā Jalāl ud-dīn was their spokesman, but when they arrived in the presence of the Khwāja, the reflection of Divine grace radiating from his countenance, made everyone dumbfounded. At last Maulānā Jalāl ud-dīn gathered his courage and asked whether they could occasionally devote a little time in debates among them. The Khwāja replied, "What should I say? I have to take another work from you!"[2]

1. *Siar-ul-Auliā*, p. 510
2. *Ibid.*, p. 306

Saiyid Nasīr ud-dīn Mahmūd, who was later to become the spiritual successor of the Khwāja and whose fame travelled to the four corners of the country as *Chiragh-i-Dehli* (the Lamp of Delhi), intensely desired to lead the life of a recluse in a far off hill or wilderness. He communicated his wish to the Khwāja through Amīr Khusrū but got the reply: "Tell him that he has to live among the people and to bear the insolence and ill-behaviour of the people and to requite it with generosity and sacrifice."[1]

Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn was followed by a long line of eminent *sufi* successors who acquired great reputation for piety and spread the *Chishtiyah* fraternity all over the country. After Nasīr ud-dīn Mahmūd *Chiragh-i-Dehli* who, like his spiritual mentor, kept his banner aloft and continued to exert a potent influence over the capital for 32 years, one of his disciples, Saiyid Muhammad Gesū Darāz (d. 825) established himself at Gulbarga in Deccan. His other noted disciples were Kamāl ud-dīn ʿAllāmah, Sheikh Abul Muqtadir Kindī, Sheikh Ahmad Thānesrī, Sheikh Jalāl ud-dīn Husain, also known as *Makhdūm Jahāniān Jahān Gasht*,, who became great leaders of the *Chishtiyah* order. They all contributed to the revival of Islam in India and infused spiritual fervour among the people. They easily won the favour of the multitudes, while a number of their spiritual successors became influential guides of the sovereigns, not only in spiritual but in political affairs as well.

1. *Siar-ul-Auliā*, p. 237

VII

Religious and Moral Revival

In the moral-spiritual guidance of his disciples, the Khwāja was always cautious, discreet and watchful. One of Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn's disciples, Muʿīd ud-dīn held a responsible post in the court of Sultān ʿAlāʾ ud-dīn Khiljī. Soon After pledging devotion to the Khwāja, Muʿīd ud-dīn resigned his office and became an inmate of the Khwāja's monastery. An able and competent officer that Muʿīd ud-dīn was, Sultān ʿAlāʾ ud-dīn keenly felt his absence and conveyed his displeasure to the Khwāja through one of his courtiers. "It seems that the Sheikh wants to make everybody like him," said the King. The Khwāja sent the reply, "Not like me, but better than myself."[1]

The Khwāja not only guided his disciples to advance on the path of spirituality through prayers, litanies and meditations but also infused in them an ardent zeal for preaching and upholding righteousness with amazing perseverance. The spiritual preceptorship of the Khwāja made his disciples so bold that they could daringly and unhesitatingly put forward what they considered to be right before the kings and despotic rulers. Of a truth, a man of God can never be intimidated, cowed or discouraged, for, timidity is born out of a desire to avoid or escape a material detriment or disadvantage. But a man who has already expelled all worldly desires and longings also casts off

1. *Siar-ul-Auliāʾ*, p. 311

the emotion excited by a threat to his person or belongings. The mystical yearning for ecstatic illumination or the strivings to attain that perfect knowledge of God which is known by the name of *Tawhid* or Unity of Godhead invariably leads to the explusion of fear—fear of everything except God. To a man attaining that stage the demonstration of wealth and power and the grand and stately ceremonials of royalty begin to appear to be no more than the child's play. Nothing in the world can then deter such a man from speaking out the truth in the face of haughty and despotic emperors.

Fearlessness

Every student of history is aware of the unbounded pride and pomp of Sultān Muhammad Tughlaq. Once the Sultān happened to camp near Hānsī. Mukhlisul Mulk Nizām ud-dīn Nazarbarī was deputed by Sultān Muhammad Tughlaq for inspection of the fort at Hānsī. When this man, known for his heartless cruelty, happened to pass by the house of Sheikh Qutb ud-dīn Munawwar, one of the Khwāja's disciples and spiritual successors, he expressed surprise that the Sheikh had not come to pay his respect to the King. On returning from his errand he brought the matter to the notice of the King. The Sultān, enraged by the report, ordered Hasan Sar Barahna, another man of despotic character, to produce the Sheikh before him Hasan communicated the royal summons to the Sheikh and also told him in reply to a query made by the Sheikh, that he had no choice but to take the Sheikh with him. The Sheikh thanked God that he had not to seek the audience of the King of his own accord. Then, committing the members of his household to the care of God, he set on foot with Hasan with his staff in his hand and the prayer mat on his shoulder. Hasan offered a carriage but the Sheikh preferred to walk on foot. When he reached the camp of the King, he was ordered to proceed to Delhi. On entering the royal court at Delhi, he found the grandees and the chiefs, attendants and guards arrayed to the right and left of the imperial throne. The Sheikh was accompanied by his son

Nūr ud-dīn who got overawed by the pomp and pageantry of the royal court. The Sheikh atonce said loudly to his son: "Baba Nūr ud-dīn, Greatness and Might belongeth to God alone." Nūr ud-dīn later told that as soon as he heard those words, his fright disappeared and he felt that the King and his courtiers were as meek as goats. When the King saw the Sheikh approaching him, he feigned occupation in archery but as the Sheikh got near him, he got up to shake hands with him. The Sheikh firmly gripped his hand without exhibiting the least traces of fear. The King said: "I went to your neighbourhood, but you did not come to guide me on the path of righteousness nor did you honour me by your visit."

"A recluse that I am," replied the Sheikh, "I do not consider myself worthy of meeting the Kings. Betaking myself to a corner of your kingdom I spend my days in praying God for the welfare of the King and the Muslims. I need to be exempted from all formalities."

Pleased with the reply given by the Sheikh, the King asked his brother Fīroz Shāh to do whatever the Sheikh liked. The Sheikh preferred to return to Hānsī and was allowed to do so. Later on, the King told his courtiers that he had met many divines but none had dared to shake hands with him so firmly as did Sheikh Qutb ud-dīn Munawwar. "He gripped my hand so firmly as if he had no speck of fear in his heart," observed Sultān Muhammad Tughlaq.

Before Sheikh Qutb ud-dīn Munawwar left Delhi the King sent Fīroz Shāh and Zia[3] ud-dīn Barnī with a purse of one lakh Tankās.[1] The Sheikh refused to accept the present saying that two seers of rice and a *dāng*[2] of *ghee*[3] would be enough for a mendicant like him. The King then ordered to let him have fifty thousand Tankās. The Sheikh refused that too. Ultimately the amount was brought down to two thousand Tankās, but

1. Tanka, derived from Turkish vocabulary meant 'White' and was the silver coin of those days.
2. A unit of weight
3. Clarified butter

when the Sheikh again refused the present, Fīroz Shāh and Ziā' ud-dīn Barnī prevailed upon the Sheikh to accept the present lest the King should again get annoyed and put him to harm. Thereupon the Sheikh accepted the amount but distributed it to the poor and needy before leaving Delhi.[1]

At the time Sultān Muhammad Tughlaq decided to transfer the inhabitants of Delhi to Devagiri, he had also conceived the idea of capturing Turkistān and Khurasān to exterminate the progeny of Chenghīz Khān. He had ordered that all the eminent doctors of religion should be invited to deliver sermons in order to arouse the people for taking part in his projected holy war. In this connection a few of the Khwāja's eminent disciples, such as Maulānā Fakhr ud-dīn Zarrādī, Maulānā Shams ud-dīn Yahyā and Sheikh Nasīr ud-dīn Mahmūd were also asked to appear before the King. Maulānā Fakhr ud-dīn Zarrādī was first brought before the Sultān although he very much detested to see the King and often used to remark that he saw his head rolling on the ground in the royal court. What he meant was that he would in any case speak out the truth and the King would have him beheaded. However, when Maulānā Fakhr ud-dīn entered the royal court, one of the King's secretaries and a disciple of the Maulānā, Qutb ud-dīn Dabīr took up his shoes and stood behind him like a servant.

The King said: "I propose to wipe out the progeny of Chenghīz Khān from the surface of the earth. Would you help me in accomplishing this task?

"*Inshā Allah*" (if God so wills), replied the Maulānā.

"But your reply bespeaks of your doubt." retorted the King.

"This is what one should say about the future," the Maulānā replied calmly.

"Alright, tender me your advice" the King said again angrily.

"Subdue your anger," was the reply given by Maulānā

1. *Siar-ul-Auliā*, pp. 253-55

Zarrādī.

Still more enraged, the King asked, "Which anger?"

"Anger that behoves wild beasts," promptly replied the Maulānā.

The towering fury that swept away the King was now visible from his face, but he kept quiet. After a short while he ordered the servants to bring food. The King invited Maulānā Zarrādī to take food with him. The two shared their meals from the same dish. The king presented pieces of meat with his own hands but the Maulānā took very little of it as if he did not like to have food with the King. Before giving a send off to the Maulānā, the King presented a robe of honour and a purse to him. But before Maulānā Zarrādī could refuse these, Qutb ud-dīn Dabīr stepped ahead and took the presents from the King on behalf of the Maulānā. After the Maulānā had departed, the King called for Qutb ud-dīn Dabīr and said: "What a treacherous man you are! First you took up his shoes and then the presents. You thus saved him from my sword but exposed yourself to danger." Qutb ud-dīn Dabīr replied, "Maulānā Fakhr ud-dīn Zarrādī is my teacher and the successor of my spiritual mentor. I ought to have carried his shoes on my head rather than in the armpit; what to speak of the presents you made to him!" The King threatened to have him put to sword. Later on whenever the name of Maulānā Fakhr ud-dīn Zarrādī was mentioned to the King, he used to remark: "Alas, he escaped from my sword."[1]

Guidance of Administration

The precursors of the *Chishtiyah* order had, from the very beginning, kept themselves aloof from the ruling elite but they were never unmindful of providing necessary guidance to them. Whenever they were called upon to tender their advice or whenever they got an opportunity to exercise their influence over the rulers, they always tried to show them the path of compassion

1. *Siar-ul-Auliā'*, pp. 271-73

and humanitarianism. Many among the kings of India and the governors of provinces held these spiritual guides in the highest regard or were often united with them by oath of fealty with the result that they pursued, under the benign guidance of their Sheikhs, policies designed to mitigate the sufferings of their subjects, enforced justice and acted on the injunctions of the *Sharī'āh*.

Only a few rulers of India could compare with a king so just, mild, kind-hearted and respectful of the injunctions of the *Sharī'āh* as Sultān Fīroz Shāh Tughlaq. Shams-i-Sirāj 'Afīf and Zia' ud-dīn Barnī speak of the achievements of this good natured Sultān. The author of *Tārīkh-i-Firishta*, Abul Qāsim Hindu Shāh, writes: "He was a learned, just, gracious and softhearted ruler. His subjects as well the armed forces, were well-pleased with him. During the reign of this sovereign no tyrant could oppress the weak."[1]

This noted historian has enumerated three characteristics of his rule unmatched by that of other rulers of the age. Fīroz Shāh never had to take recourse to the methods of chastisement for his benevolence and generosity left no room for it. The land revenue was fixed by him according to the paying capacity of the people and all the tithes and taxes unjustly imposed by the former rulers were abolished. He never encouraged anyone to make false reports to him about his subjects. And, lastly, he appointed God-fearing and sympathetic governors to administer the provinces who emulated the King in their kind treatment of the people.[2]

But only a few persons are aware of the fact that Sultān Fīroz Shāh owed his accession to the throne to Khwāja Nasīr ud-dīn Mahmūd *Chiragh-i-Dehli*.[3]

Shams-i-Sirāj 'Afif graphically relates how Fīroz Shāh ascended she throne. He says: "Sheikh Nasīr ud-dīn accompanied

1. *Tārīkh Fīrishta*, Vol. I, p. 278
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 271
3. *Ibid.*, p. 259

Sultān Muhammad Tughlaq when he went to suppress the revolt in Thatha. The Sultān died[1] and Fīroz Shāh called a meeting of the nobles and courtiers. Sheikh Nasīr ud-dīn, however, sent the word to Fīroz Shāh whether he would dispense justice to the people or he should pray God for another ruler for them? Fīroz Shāh sent back the reply: 'I shall be just and kind to the creatures of God.' Thereupon the Sheikh replied: 'If you would do what you promise, then I would request God Almighty to grant you forty years.' And the Sultān really ruled for forty years."[2]

Sultān Muhammad Shāh Bahmanī (759-776 A.H.) was acknowledged as the ruler after the death of his father ʿAlāʾ ud-dīn Bahman Shāh[3] by all the mystic Sheikhs of Deccan who took oath of allegiance to him but Sheikh Zain-ud-dīn (d. 801 A.H.) refused to take the oath on the ground that the King was a drunkard and indulged in acts declared unlawful by the *Sharīʿah*.

In 767 A.H., when the Sultan came to Daulatabad, he demanded that Sheikh Zain ud-dīn should either personally call upon him or acknowledge his suzerainty in writing. The reply given by the Sheikh was: "Once a religious scholar, a Saiyid and an eunuch happened to fall in the hands of certain heathens who offered to spare their lives only if they prostrated before their idols. The scholar prostrated before the idol acting on the permission given by the *Sharīʿah* to save one's life in such circumstances. The Saiyid too followed suit but the eunuch said that since he had spent his whole life in transgressing the commandments of God and had no hope of salvation like the scholar or the Saiyid, it would be better for him to give his life in the way of God. Thus he preferred death to prostration before idols. I am also pretty much like that eunuch; I shall

1. Sultān Muhammad Tughlaq died on 21st Muharram 752 A. H. (Sunday, 20th March 1351 A. D.).
2. Shams-i-Sirāj Afif, p. 28
3. *Firishta* reports that he died in Rabiʿul-Awwal, 759 but according to *Tārikh- ul-Mulūk* Bahman died in 761 A. H.

bear every hardship but would neither call upon you nor take the oath of allegiance." The Sultān got enraged and ordered the Sheikh to leave the city atonce. Sheikh Zain ud-dīn took only his prayer mat and set out to the shrine of his spiritual guide Sheikh Burhān ud-dīn. He sat down there and told the emissaries of the King that nobody could move him from that place. Failing in his effort, the King sent a message to the Sheikh through one of his ministers which said : "I am thine, be thou mine."

Sheikh Zain ud-dīn replied : "If the Sultān Ghāzī upholds the laws of the *Sharīʿah*, closes down all wine shops throughout his dominion, gives up drinking and follows in the footsteps of his father in charging the Qāzīs, *ʿUlamā* and the governors to ensure that the path of righteousness is betaken and the ways of sin forbidden, then he shall not find anybody a better friend and well-wisher than me." The two couplets Sheikh Zain ud-dīn wrote concluding his letter to the King were :

So long as the chain of breath keeps us living ;
Nothing shall we do but chaste as morning.
For those who cast on us a glance belighting ;
From us a world of good shall they ever be getting.

The Sultān was so pleased to find himself addressed as Ghāzī by the Sheikh that he issued an edict that henceforth it should form part of his royal title. Thereafter Sultān Muhammad Shāh Bahmanī immediately returned to Gulbarga, proclaimed the ban on sale of liquor, enforced *Sharīʿah* as the law of the land and made energetic efforts to root out theft, burglary and robbery. The Sultān took about six months in completing his reforms but, in the meantime, he kept corresponding with Sheikh Zain ud-dīn and seeking his advice about the conduct of his administrative policy.[1]

In other parts of the country, too, where the Sheikhs of *Chishtiyah* order had set up their monasteries, they continued to guide the rulers to keep them on the straight and even path

1. *Tarīkh Fīrishta*, Vol. I, pp. 560-62

chalked out by the *Sharīᶜah*. The famous *Chishtiyah* monastery of Pandwah in Bengal was a source of strength for the Muslim Kingdom in that part of the country. Professor Khalīq Ahmad Nizāmī has related, in *Tārīkh Mashaᵓikh-i-Chist*, how the saints of *Chishtiyah* order helped to re-establish Muslim rule in Bengal.[1] "Nūr Qutb-i-ᶜĀlam was" writes Pro. Nizāmī, "the son of Sheikh ᶜAlāᵓ-ul-Haq. During the period he was holding charge of the monastery, Bengal was passing through a political crisis. Raja Kans, a local Zamindar belonging to Bhitoriah in Rajshahi district, usurped the throne of the Raja, a vassal of Delhi, and tried to drive away imperial forces. Nūr Qutb-i-ᶜĀlam established contact with Sultān Ibrāhīm Sharqī, as well as made efforts through Saiyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Samnānī to persuade the Sultān to invade Bengal. The collection of letters written by Saiyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Samnānī giving the details of the then political situation obtaining in Bengal are particularly instructive. The letter written by Saiyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Samnānī in reply to the communication sent by Nūr Qutb-i-ᶜĀlam sheds considerable light upon the efforts made by the *sufī* saints of Bengal."[2]

Here we have given but a few examples to illustrate the path of mysticism trodden hy the saints of *Chishtiyah* order which did not mean merely a withdrawal from the world for penance and prayer and purification of their souls but also burdened them with the duty of diffusing righteousness, speaking out the truth in the face of autocraft and tyrant rulers, putting their lives at stake to check grossness and, above all, keeping the masses as well as the ruling elite on the right path.

The Preaching of Islam

From the very first day the *sufī sheikhs* of *Chistiyah* order entered India they remained itinerant preachers of Islam. The

1. For fuller details see *Riyāz-us-Salātīn* (*Tārīkh Bengālah*) by Ghulām Husain Salīm.
2. *Tārīkh Mashaᵓikh-i-Chisht*, pp. 201-202

accessions to Islam through Khwāja Moᶜīn ud dīn Chishtī were quite numerous. Just how much was the success achieved by him can never be measured in the absence of records kept by his contemporaries. It is, however, an established fact that the spread of Islam in India was the fruit of the Khwāja's piety and religious zeal. A large number of people were attracted and inspired by the spiritual power and divinely endowed popularity enjoyed by the Khwāja. India has always had quite a number of wandering mendicants who had developed occult powers with the help of *yoga*. Not unoften these *sufī* saints were challenged by the wonder-working *yogis* who soon discovered that the superior spiritual powers and the undoubted piety of the *Chishti* mystics was something quite different from the magical feats performed by them. The *Chishti sheikhs* also won the confidence of the masses because of their pious and frugal living, simple and straightforward religious and social precepts, love of suffering humanity, selfless service and disregard of the barriers of caste and creed and high and low which had been for centuries the blight of an oppressive caste-ridden social order in the country. The biographies and memoirs of the mystics mention numerous incidents of confrontation between the *yogis* and *sufī* saints. These cannot be substantiated by the records of historians of the kings and emperors but the prevailing taste for wonder-working and credulous mind of the then India and the convergence of spiritually elevated souls in Ajmer during the times of Khwāja Moᶜīn ud-dīn Chishtī leave little doubt about the veracity of the stories told in the tracts of the mystics. But, in truth and reality, it was not the spiritual power alone possessed by the Khwāja that won conspicuous success but his purity of heart, grandeur of holiness and simple way of life which were something new for the inhabitants of India.

Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn *Ganjshakar* occupies an eminent place among the spiritual successors of Khwāja ᶜMoīn ud-dīn because of his excessive zeal to spread the message of Islam in the country. Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn Aulīā[3] says that "people

belonging to every caste and creed, mendicants and non-mendicants flocked to listen to his sermons."

Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn possessed such a hypnotic spiritual influence that the claim made about his causing a considerable number of non-Muslims to turn to Islam does not seem to be at all exaggerated. A number of Muslim clans and families settled in the Punjab, specially around Pakpattan, still trace the conversion of their ancestors to the efforts of Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn. Thomas Arnold writes in 'The Preaching of Islam' that "the conversion of the inhabitants of the western plains of the Punjab is said to have been affected through the preaching of Bahā al-Haqq of Multān[2] and Baba Farīd al-Dīn of Pakpattan, who flourished about the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth centuries. A biographer of the latter saint gives a list of sixteen tribes who were won over to Islam through his preaching, but unfortunately provides us with no details of this work of conversion."[3]

Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn was a zealous preacher of Islam but he also held the view that mere preaching was not enough to win over anyone from his ancestral religion, particularly when it was doubly guarded by caste taboos and age-old social customs. In his opinion it was necessary that one should be afforded the opportunity of intimate acquaintanceship and fellowship for a considerable period for winning him over to a new faith.

There is little doubt that the Khwāja, during his spiritual preceptorship of about half a century in the capital of the empire, which was visited by innumerable persons on errands of commerce and administrative business, and very many of whom, both Muslims and non-Muslims, would have deemed it a privilege to pay their respect to the renowned saint, must have succeeded in winning over a large number of converts to his faith. To the south of Ghiyāthpur lies the district of Mewāt

1. *Fawā'id-ul-Fuwād*, p. 5
2. Otherwise known as Sheikh Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyya
3. The Preaching of Islam, p. 281

whose contumacious people always harassed the inhabitants of Delhi and invited chastisement by Ghiyāth ud-dīn Balban. Although it is difficult to obtain accurate information but the successful penetration of Islam in a greater part of this area was made possible by the potent influence exerted by Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn.

The moral excellence and godliness and the spirit of humanity and fraternity exhibited by these Chishtī missionaries must have inspired the population around their monasteries as a revelation from on High. To the credulous minds looking forward to performance of miracles as a proof of spiritual power, the developed spirituality and miraculous deeds of the mystics must have certainly been a source of attraction and opened their way for entering the new faith. All these causes explain the conversion of large numbers around the monasteries of Pandwah in Bengal and those in Ahmadabad and Gulbargah in the south. Shāh Kalīm ullah, an eminent Chishti preceptor of the eleventh century was ever vigilant, as his letters to his spiritual vicegerent Sheikh Nizām ud-dīn of Aurangabad[1] show, about the missionary work of his disciples. In a letter to Sheikh Nizām ud-dīn his spiritual mentor asked him to "try to widen the sphere of Islam by winning over people to it."[2] In another letter Shāh Kalīm ullah exhorted him to continue his endeavour "to spread the word of God and to shed the light of truth from east to west."[3] Prof. Khalīq Ahmad Nizāmi writes that efforts made by Sheikh Nizām ud-dīn brought a large number of non-Muslims within the fold of Islam. Although a few of them did not declare their conversion for the fear of their relatives, they had embraced the faith in all sincerity.[4]

Unfortunately no careful records of the individualistic missionary activities of *Chishti* sheikhs could be kept but almost

1 He belonged to Oudh, his birth-place being village Nagram in Lucknow district.

2. *Maktūbāt-i-Kalīmī*, letter No. 76, p. 60

3. *Ibid*, No. 80. p. 62

4. *Tārīkh Mashā'ikh-i-Chisht*, p. 303

all the historians are unanimous on the point that these men of God endowed with piety and religious zeal had, through their own personal interest in the spread of Islam, and inspired with a divine call, succeeded in converting a large number of Indians to the faith of the Prophet. There is also little doubt that this great display of missionary zeal was the handiwork of the early precursors of the *Chishtiyah* order in India.

Educational Endeavours

The importance accorded to the acquisition of knowledge by Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn and his other disciples is illustrated by the interest shown by Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn in the edification of his spiritual vicegerants. Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn Auliā' as well as Sheikh Sirāj ud-dīn ʿUthmān of Oudh, the founder of the famous Chishtī monastery of Pandwah, never conferred the habit of spiritual successorship on any disciple until he had attained the requisite educational standard. The result of it was that the edification of soul was accompanied by the cultivation of mind and this process continued till the *Chishtiyah* order itself showed signs of decline. An eminent disciple of Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn was Maulānā Shams ud-dīn Yahyā who was an accomplished scholar of his time. In a couplet Sheikh Nasīr ud-dīn *Chirāgh-i-Dehli* says :

"Who gave thee life eternal, I enquired from learning ;
"Shams ud-dīn Yahyā, she came out hastening."

Among the disciples of Sheikh Nasīr ud-dīn *Chiragh-i-Delhi*, Qāzī ʿAbdul Muqtadir Kindī (d. 791) was an erudite scholar who left such renowned men of learning as Maulānā Khwājgi of Delhi (809 A.H.) and Sheikh Ahmad of Thaneswar (d. 820 A.H.) and Sheikh Shahāb ud-dīn Ahmad ibn ʿUmar of Daulatābād (d. 849 A.H.), author of *Sharah Kāfiyah*, who occupies a eminent place among the scholars of medieval India. The last mentioned was a student of both Maulānā Khwājgi and Qāzī ʿAbdul Muqtadir Kindī. Commentaries of *Sharah Kāfiyah* were later written by such renowned scholars as ʿAllāma Gazrunī and Mīr Ghiyāth ud-dīn Mansūr Shirāzī. When Sheikh Shahāb

ud-dīn fell seriously ill, Sultān Ibrāhīm Sharqī took a cup of water as a token of sacrifice and prayed thus to God : "My Lord, this prince of scholars is the pride of my kingdom. If Thou has ordained him to die, accept my life in his behalf."

Another distinguished man of learning belonging to the *Chishtiyah* order was Maulānā Jamāl-ul-Auliā' *Chishtī* of Korah (d. 1047 A.H.) Amongst his students the most noted for their learning were Maulānā Lutf ullah of Korah, Saiyid Muhammad Tirmizī of Kalpi, Sheikh Muhammad Rashīd of Jaunpur and Sheikh Yāsīn of Banaras. Maulānā Lutf ullah was succeeded by such illustrious scholars as Maulānā Ahmad of Amethī (also known as Mulla Jeewan), Qāzī ʿAlīm ullah and Maulana ʿAli Asghar of Kannauj. The educational seminary of the Tīla Masjid in Lucknow, once famous throughout India, was headed by Shāh Pīr Muhammad (d. 1085 A.H.) who was also spiritually united to the *Chishtiyah* order. Similarly, the originator of *Nizāmiyah* curriculum enjoying worldwide fame was Mullā Nizām ud-dīn of Firangī Mahal (d. 1161 A.H.) whose followers and descendants belonged to the *Chishtiyah* fraternity. These *Chishti* scholars, of whom many were of such merit and stature as to be regarded men of outstanding merit among the scholars of their time, strengthened the traditions of deep learning and caused it to spread far and wide within the country. The chroniclers of India have acknowledged the valuable contribution made to the cause of education by the *Chishtiyah* monastaries of Pandwah, Gulbarga, Manikpur, Saloan and other places which also find a mention in the letters written to their contemporaries by Nūr Qutb -i-ʿĀlam, Jahāngīr Ashraf Samnānī and Shāh Kalīm ullah of Jahānābād.

The Decline of the Chishtiyah Order

Before we conclude this fascinating story of the golden era of *Chishtiyah* order in India, it appears necessary to throw light on its decay which was set in with the passage of time, as was the case with other intellectual and reformative movements. The *Chishtiyah* order, and, for that matter, every other mystical

order, came into existence through a deep attachment of mind and heart toward God. These movements tended to gather themselves around men of piety and spiritual gifts, but, in course of time, they degenerated into a cold formalism of customary rituals and formulas. In this case too, the movement which started with the cultivation of religious experience through love-divine and piety, spirit of sacrifice and humanity, meditations and prayer and missionary zeal was ultimately overtaken by these three-fold erratic tendencies.

(1) An exaggerated belief in the doctrine of pantheistic monism, formulation of its intellectually subtle definitions and their propagation.

(2) Frequent musical recitations accompanied by whirling and ecstatic transports.

(3) Ever increasing celebrations of *ʿUrs* on the occassion of death anniversaries of the saints which transgressed the limits of *Sharīʿah*.

The very un-Islamic customs and creeds which were sought to be reformed by the early reformers of indefatigable missionary spirit and zeal hailing from the far off corners of Iran and Turkistān became, indeed, by an irony of fate, such an inseparable part of the later-day mystic rituals that it has now become difficult for the non-Muslims to distinguish them from the religious practices of other polytheistic creeds. The unalloyed monotheism or *Tawhīd*, the corner-stone of Islam, was transformed into pantheistic monism; the path of the Prophet zealously trodden by the *Chishti* precursors became a sign and symbol of those followers of orthodox Islam who were branded as formalists and opponents of mysticism. The *Sharīʿah* and mysticism marked such a complete parting of their ways that the two came to be regarded as opposed to each other. The use of musical instruments, forbidden by the early *Chishti* saints, were introduced in musical recitations by the later mystics but the deep and real spiritual experience through absorption in the remembrance of God took flight from their concourses. Renunciation of worldly desires and appetites, chosen by the

anchorites of old as their distinctive mark, gave place to the pomposity of grand and stately ceremonials.

And, perhaps, an even greater tragedy resulting from these corrupting influences has been that the sublimated souls who had dedicated their lives to bring the erring humanity back to the overlordship of God from the entanglements of worldly desires and material benefits themselves became the objects of worshipful adoration for their misguided followers. The omniscient Lord has really addressed a warning to these very misguided folk in these words of the Scripture :

> "It is not (possible) for any human being unto whom Allah had given the Scripture and wisdom and the prophethood that he should afterwards have said unto mankind : Be slave of me instead of Allah ; but (what he said was) : Be ye faithful servants of the Lord by virtue of your constant teaching of the Scripture and of your constant study thereof.
>
> "And he commanded you not that ye should take the angels and the prophets for lords. Would he command you to disbelieve after ye had surrendered (to Allah) ?"[1]

1. Q. III : 79-80

MAKHDUM-UL-MULK

SHEIKH SHARAF UD-DIN YAHYA MANERI

Makhdum-ul-Mulk

SHEIKH SHARAF UD-DIN YAHYA MANERI

I

From Birth to Adulthood

Known popularly as Makhdūm-ul-Mulk Bihārī, his name was Ahmad ibn Sheikh Yahya, title Sharaf ud-dīn, and he claimed his descent from one of the Prophet's uncles, Zubair ibn ʿAbdul Muttalib, belonging to the Hashimite clan of the Quraish of Mecca. His grandfather, Maulānā Muhammad Tāj ud-dīn, a contemporary of Shahāb ud-dīn Ghori, was a celebrated scholar and mystic who had emigrated to Manyar[1] in Bihar from the town of Al-Khalīl[2] in Syria.

Maulānā Tāj ud-dīn remained for some time at Maner, where he succeeded in converting quite a large number of persons to Islam; but he ultimately returned to Al-Khalīl, leaving his family at Maner.

The maternal grand-father of Ahmad Sharaf ud-dīn, Sheikh Shahāb ud-dīn *Jag Jot* (The light of the world) was also a

1. The town is presently known as Maner, but Ibrāhīm Qawwām Fārūqī, who wrote *Farhang Ibrāhīmī* between 862 A. H. and 879 A. H., gives its name as Manyar.
2. Al-Khalīl, drawing its name from the Prophet Ibrahīm (Abraham) who is stated to be buried there, is at a distance of about 24 kilometres from Jerusalem The town now forms part of Jordan.

renowned mystic Sheikh of *Suharwardiyah* order. Belonging to Kāshghar, he had come down to Jathli,[1] a village about 5 kilometers from Patna. A spiritually animated soul reputed for his piety, he too came of the lineage of Imām Husain. Ahmad Sharaf ud-dīn was thus a lineal descendant of the Prophet from his mother's side also.

Ahmad Shafaf ud-dīn was born on the last Friday of Shaʿabān, 661 A. H. at Maner. He had three other brothers whose names were Sheikh Khalīl ud-dīn, Sheikh Jalīl ud-dīn and Sheikh Habīb ud-dīn.

Early Education

The system of education followed in those days required the students of primary stage to cram the text of the prescribed books including some short lexicons so as to enable them to store up a copious vocabulary in their mind. The system, however, entailed unnecessary labour and wastage of the time of children. Ahmad Sharaf ud-dīn deplored the system in *Maʿadan-ul-Maʿānī*: "When I was a child my teachers got me to learn by heart a number of books like those on *infinitive* nouns, the first part of *Miftāhul-Lughāt*, and similar other books. We were required to learn these word by word and repeat them. Instead of these books, they could have better got the Qurʾān fixed in our memory."[2]

Unfortunately his memoirs or the biographical accounts neither preserve the names of his earlier teachers nor the books Ahmad Sharaf ud-dīn had to study at Maner. It seems that he completed his education up to secondary stage in his

1. The author of *Sīrat-us-Sharaf* writes that the place was captured by the Muslims in 576 A. H., 12 years before Sultān Shahāb ud-dīn Ghorī won the final battle against Prithviraj at Tarain. This raises the question whether Muslims had extended their settlements to the bounds of Bihar and Bengal even before Sultān Shahāb ud-dīn Ghorī laid the foundation of Muslim rule in India. The question, however, needs a deeper probe by the historians.
2. *Maʿad an-ul Maʿānī*, p. 43

home town.

Further Education

Before Ahmad Sharaf ud-dīn could leave Maner for further education elsewhere, Providence afforded him an opportunity to come in contact with a reputed scholar and pedagogue of his time, Maulānā Sharaf ud-dīn Abū Towāmah, who had to leave Delhi because of the King's displeasure somehow incurred by him. It is stated that certain academicians, jealous of Maulānā Sharaf ud-dīn, had brought him into discredit with Sultān Ghiyāth ud-dīn Balban. Maulānā Sharaf ud-dīn decided to migrate to the border town of Sonārgaon[1] on the eastern fringe of the then Muslim Kingdom in India. On his way to Sonargaon he stopped for a few days at Maner. The inhabitants of Maner, on coming to know of the Maulānā's worth and ability flocked to pay respect to him. Young Ahmad Sharaf ud-dīn was also highly impressed by the piety and learning of Maulānā Sharaf ud-dīn.[2] He requested his parents to let him accompany the Maulānā to Sonārgaon so as to undergo his schooling at the feet of the Maulānā. Speaking of his teacher, in *Khwān-i-Pur Ni'amat*, writes Ahmad Sharaf ud-dīn : "Maulānā Sharaf ud-dīn was an erudite scholar, without a peer, whose fame had travelled to the four corners of India."[3]

Shāh Shu'aib Firdausī relates in *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā* that Ahmad Sharaf ud-dīn was so assiduous at his studies that he did not like to spend a moment away from it. As the repast with others normally took a little more time which Ahmad Sharaf ud-dīn loathed to waste, his teacher had to permit him

1 Sonārgaon was then the seat of the Provincial Government of East Bengal Now an insignificant place across the river Brahamputra in Dacca district, and known by the name of Painam, the ruins of its dilapidated buildings and mosques tell the story of its past splendour. The famous national high-way constructed by Sher Shāh Sūrī terminated in the east at Sonārgaon.

2. *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā*

3. *Khwān-i-Pur Ni'āmat*, p. 15

to take his food alone in his own room.[1] It has been reported that he was so occupied in his studies that he never went through the letters sent to him by his family members, lest these might cause him some anxiety or distraction from his studies.[2]

Having taught him all the then prevalent sciences, religious and discursive, Maulānā Sharaf ud-dīn suggested him to learn something about alchemy too, but Ahmad excused himself by saying: "Education of religious sciences would suffice for me." Maulānā Sharaf ud-dīn had such a high regard for his talented disciple that he offered the hand of his daughter to him. During Ahmad's stay at Sonārgaon, his wife gave birth to a son whom he named Zakī ud-dīn.

Ahmad Returns Home

Ahmad's father, Sheikh Yahya Manerī died on the 11th of Shaʿabān, 690 A. H. Having received the news at Sonārgaon, Ahmad Sharaf ud-dīn hastened back to Maner with his son Zakī ud-dīn. As the author of *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā* says, Ahmad left his son under the care of his own mother and begged her to allow him to leave the place for good. He made his way to Delhi with the intention of gaining spiritual insight under the *sūfī* sheikhs at Delhi.

It was the year 690 A. H. or 691 A.H. when Ahmad Sharaf ud-dīn set out for Delhi with his brother Sheikh Jalīl ud-dīn. It seems that the careful guidance of his learned teacher had enabled Ahmad Sharaf ud-dīn to recognise the worth of the mystics by their piety and spiritual attainments. He paid visits to nearly all the then *sufī* divines of Delhi but was impressed by none except Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn Aulia[3]. For the other mystics of Delhi, his comment was: "If this is spiritual preceptorship, I, too, can claim to be a mystic mentor."[3] Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn Aulia[3] showed due courtesy to Ahmad. They

1. *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā*, pp. 131-32
2. *Sīrat-us-Sharaf*, p. 46; *Nuzhat ul-Khawātir*, Vol. II, p. 9
3. *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā*, p. 321

had discussion on some literary topic and the Khwāja was impressed by Ahmad's replies to the questions asked by him. However, as his biographers report, the Khwāja remarked, after Ahmad had taken leave of him: "He is a hawk soaring high in the sky, but fate has not earmarked him to my lot."[1]

Ahmad Sharaf ud-dīn then directed his course to Panipat where he met Bū ʿAlī Qalandar, but he left him saying: "An attracted devotee that he is, he cannot guide others."[2]

Sheikh Najīb ud-dīn Firdausī

Ahmad Sharaf ud-dīn came back disheartened from Delhi and Panipat. His elder brother Sheikh Jalīl ud-dīn, however, suggested him to see Khwāja Najīb ud-dīn Firdausī and told him about the distinctive features of his order. Ahmad replied: "The one who is the pivot of spiritual perfection at Delhi (meaning Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn Aulia') sent me back with a tray of betels. What shall I gain by meeting others?" But, on the insistence of his brother, he made up his mind to betake himself to Delhi once more. As he related later on, he found himself in a flutter, and profusely perspiring when he got near Khwāja Najīb ud-dīn Firdausī. He says that he had never had a similar experience earlier on meeting any other mystic. As soon as Khwāja Firdausī saw Ahmad, he said: "Chewing betels and carrying betel-leaves in your handkerchief you have come to see me, and still you presume yourself to be an spiritual guide!" Ahmad emitted the betel he was chewing and sat down bewildered as if suddenly awakened to an unthought-of truth. After a while, he requested Khwāja Najīb ud-dīn to accept him under his spiritual preceptorship. The Khwāja graciously agreed to his request but sent him back after taking the *baʿit* from him.[3]

1. *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā*, p. 321
2. *Ibid.*, p. 132
3. *Ibid.*, p. 132

II

The Firdausiyah Order in India

Sheikh Shahāb ud-dīn ʿUmar Suharwardī, the celebrated author of the *Awarif-ul-Maʿārif* and founder of the *Suhrawardiyah* order of sufism, pursued his first studies of mysticism under his uncle Khwāja Ẓiaʾ ud-dīn Abul Najīb ʿAbdul Qādir Suhrawardī (d. 563 A.H.). Born at Khwārazm, the latter occupied an eminent place amongst the mystics of his time. One of his prominent disciples, who had also been favoured with the habit of spiritual succession by his mentor, was Ahmad ibn ʿUmar. Popularly known by the name of Khwāja Najm ud-dīn Kubrā, Ahmad ibn ʿUmar, too, was a venerable man of God, to whom Sheikh Shahāb ud-dīn Suharwardī presented his famous mystical tract which is to this day a source of inspiration for travellers on the path of mysticism. It is related that Khwāja Najm ud-dīn Kubrā blessed the work and prayed to God to grant it immortal fame.

Immersed in rapturous love and divine contemplation, Khwāja Najm ud-dīn Kubrā possessed a natural gift of expressing the deepest mysteries of sufism with unrivalled insight and power. The author of *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā* writes:

"He used to expound the subtle points and delicate problems of *Tawhīd* (Unity), *Maʿrifat* (knowledge), *Tariqat* (pathway of mysticism) and *Haqiqat* (truth). He has left many works, both in prose and poetry, in the Arabic and Persian languages of which one entitled *Tabsarah* and another a tract explaining

the aids necessary to conduct the traveller on the path of mysticism are popular in India."[1]

Shu'aib Firdausī has quoted, in the *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā*, a few odes of Khwāja Najm ud-dīn Kubrā which, with the inner light of a true mystic, sing the song of the sweet call of the Beloved.

Khwāja Najm ud-dīn Kubrā died as a martyr fighting bravely against the invading Mongols on the 10th of Jamada-ul-Ula, 610 A.H. In the line of his spiritual successors Sheikh Mujid ud-dīn Baghdādī,[2] Sheikh Sa'ad ud-dīn Hamūya, Bābā Kamāl Junaidī, Sheikh Saif ud-dīn 'Alī Lānah, Sheikh Saif ud-dīn Bākhirzī, Sheikh Najm ud-dīn Rāzī, Sheikh Jamāl ud-dīn Mubkī and Maulānā Bahā' ud-dīn attained prominence. The author of *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā* relates that Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn 'Attār, the famous Persian poet, was also united in the bond of spiritual allegiance to Khwāja Najm ud-dīn Kubrā.[3]

Ingress of Kubraviyah Order in India

Khwāja Najm ud-dīn Kubrā's order of mysticism gained entrance in India through three distinct sources. The progress of Islam was greatly advanced in Kashmir with the arrival of Amīr Saiyid 'Alī Hamadānī,[4] in 780 A.H., when the greater part of its population embraced Islam.[5] Sheikh Hamadānī was the spiritual vicegerent of Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn Mamūd ibn 'Abdullah who was connected to Khwāja Najm ud-dīn Kubrā through four connecting links. The mystics of the order of Saiyid 'Alī Hamadāni flourished in Kashmir by the end of the eleventh century after Hijrah. Sheikh Yakūb Sarfī (d. 1003 A.H.), belonging to the Hamadānī order, was an accomplished scholar of exegesis and Traditions and the teacher of Imām Rabbānī Mujadid Alf Thānī. Mystics of the Hamadānī order are still to be found in Kashmir.

1. *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā*, p. 95
2. Author of *Mirsād-ul-'Abād*
3. *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā*, p. 99
4. Died in 786 A. H
5. The Religious Quest of India : pp. 55-56

Saiyid Qutb ud-dīn Muhammad Madnī (d. 677 A.H.), another disciple of Khwāja Najm ud-dīn Kubrā, came to India during the reign of Sultān Qutb ud-dīn Aibak (or, according to certain annalists, in the times of Sultān Shams ud-dīn Iltutmish) and was appointed Sheikh-ul-Islam at Delhi. Later he conquered Kara (Manikpur) and settled there.[1] In the line of his disciples Sheikh ʿAlāʾ ud-dīn Jiurī propagated the order under the name of *Junaidiyah* in Deccan where its followers are still to be found at certain places.

The third line of the spiritual descendants of Khwāja Najm ud-dīn Kubrā made its debut in India through Khwāja Badr ud-dīn of Samarkand, a noted disciple of Khwāja Saif ud-dīn Bākhirzī, whose spiritual preceptorship took its name from his vicegerent Sheikh Rukn ud-dīn Firdausī.

Khwāja Badr ud-dīn Samarkandī

The mystical order of Khwāja Badr ud-dīn which found entrance into the religious life of Indian Muslims through him laid stress, as its chief characteristic, upon an all absorbing divine contemplation, annihilation of the self, renunciation of the world and all it stands for, and concealment of miraculous powers. When Khwāja Badr ud-dīn came to India, the *Chishtiyah* order was rapidly gaining popularity in the country to become the major spiritual order in Indian Islam. Khwāja Qutb ud-dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī was then the most celebrated saint and a centre of attraction for the vast majority of Indian Muslims. It was an extremely difficult task to gain adherents for an order which demanded concealment of one's spiritual light from the public gaze. Shuʿaib Firdausī who belonged to the *Firdausiyah* order has given, in *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā*, the teachings of his Sheikh designed to gain a warm mystical yearning

1. His lineal descendants include many divines, scholars and defenders of Islam such as Shāh ʿAlam ullah Naqshbandī, spiritual successor of Saiyid Adam Binnaurī, Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, Khwāja Ahmad of Nasīrābād and Maulānā Syed ʿAbdul Hai, the author of *Nuzhat-ul-Kawātir*.

and fellowship with God in these words.

"He followed the way of intimate and personal love of God, and emphasised the cultivation of religious education as a bounden duty of the mystics. He demanded that the injunctions of the *Sharī'ah* should be acted upon for the sake of gaining propinquity to God ; for, he used to say that knowledge without action is valueless and action without sincerity fruitless. He advised his followers : 'Never look forward to possess miraculous powers ; for unflinching submission to God constitutes the real blessing and opens the way to ecstatic illuminations.' The *Firdausiyah* order was founded and its aids and rules formulated in India by Khwāja Badr ud-dīn Samarkandī and his disciples. The laity as well as the elect, before him, excepting those few whom God had willed to be discerning, regarded the working of miracles as a pre-requisite of spiritual preceptorship. As everybody knows, quite a number of mystic saints were there in India during the times of Khwāja Qutb ud-dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, as, for example Sheikh-ul-Islam Bahā' ud-dīn Zakariya, Sheikh Najm ud-dīn Sughrā, the Sheikh-ul-Islam of Delhi, Khwāja Badr ud-dīn Samarkandī, Sheikh-ul-Islam Mo'īn ud-dīn Sajazī, the spiritual guide of Khwāja Qutb ud-dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī. God may bless the souls of all these saints but the popular regard of the masses enjoyed by Khwāja Qutb ud-dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī was not shared by any one else. The reason for it was that the Khwāja too often called forth spiritual powers and worked miracles."[1]

Explaining the path of mysticism followed by the *Firdausiyah* order, Shu'aib Firdausī adds :

"The way of Khwāja Badr ud-dīn Samarkandī differed from that of the other *sūfīs* of India. Some of them were inspired and illuminated souls while others took to the path of spiritual travails and contemplations, prayer and penance. But the way of Khwāja Badr ud-dīn could be described as the 'State of Love.' Absorbed, engulfed and self-effacing, and acting on

1. *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā*, p. 122

the mystic maxim to consider oneself dead even before the cessation of life, these travellers of the lovers' path and wanderers of the spiritual realm cast aside all worldly relations and overstep the ring of existence at the very first attempt. The way they put their life at stake requires the traveller to be of indomitable courage and valour and only those who are ready to put off mortality can tread this path."[1]

Khwāja Badr ud-dīn Samarkandī took recourse to recitational auditions and occasionally fell in ecstatic transports. He died in the seventh century, perhaps at the time when Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn Aulia[2] was still alive, but the year of his death has not been mentioned by any biographer.[2]

Khwāja Rukn ud-dīn Firdausī

Khwāja Rukn ud-dīn Firdausī was the favourite disciple and vicegerent of Khwāja Badr ud-dīn Samarkandī. Khwāja Firdausī pursued his studies of mysticism from his very childhood under the care of Khwāja Samarkandī, and attained perfection in religious as well as mystical disciplines. It was under him that the mystic order of Khwāja Samarkandī came to be known as the *Firdausiyah* order. His was also a soul illumined by divine effulgence and rapturous transports, and like his spiritual guide, he too bade farewell to this fleeting world during the life-time of Khwāja Nizam ud-dīn Auliā'.[3]

Khwāja Najīb ud-dīn Firdausī

Being the nephew of Khwāja Rukn ud-dīn Firdausī,

1. *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā*, p. 123
2. The year of his death given in *Khazīnatul Asfiā* is 716 A. H. but the author of *Nuzhatul Khwātir* does not consider it to be correct, for he had died, according to him, earlier before the close of the seventh century.
3. The author of *Khazīnatul Asfiā* gives the year of his death as 724 A.H. but this does not appear to be correct, as his spiritual successor Sheikh Najib ud-dīn Firdausī died in 691 A.H. Maulānā ʿAbdul Hai appears to be correct in holding the view expressed in *Nuzhatul Khawātir* that Khwāja Rukn ud-dīn died by the close of the seventh century after Hijrah.

Khwāja Najīb ud-dīn had remained under the paternal tutelage of his Sheikh from his childhood and, after the death of his mentor, continued to keep alight the lamp of *Firdausiyah* order as his successor. He not only attained an eminence in the practice of spiritual life but also guided and reared a disciple who reached the highest degree of sanctity, propagated the religious order of his spiritual guides over half a century in the eastern part of the country and, through the excellent precepts of his conduct, interior illumination and intellectual attainments proved himself a peer of such elevated souls as ʿAin-ul-Qudhāt Hamadānī, Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn ʿAttār and Maulānā Jalāl ud-dīn Rūmī. Shuʿaib Firdausī writes about Khwāja Najīb ud-dīn in *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā* "Disdaining fame and popularity, he kept himself concealed behind the veil of obscurity. Verily, those who have reached the highest degree of sanctity keep themselves so hidden from the public gaze that nobody except God knows anything about them. He (Khwāja Najīb ud-dīn) had many a disciple who had reached the stage of inward illumination. Maulānā ʿĀlam,[1] the author of *Fatāwah Tatārkhāniyah*, was his disciple who has penned beautiful odes giving expression to the unfathomable depth of Divine Essence. The spiritual attainments of Khwāja Najīb ud-dīn Firdausī are hidden behind a mysterious veil."[2]

1. Maulānā Farīd ud-dīn ʿĀlam of Indrapat. He wrote *Fatawāh Tatārkhāniyah* in 777 A.H., but named it after his friend Amīr Tatār Khān. Fīroz Shāh wanted the book to be named after its author, but Farīd ud-dīn preferred to remain a ghost writer. He died perhaps in 786 A.H.
2. *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā*, p. 126

III

Life of Self-Discipline

Immediately after taking the pledge of allegiance to Khwāja Najīb ud-dīn Firdausī, says the author of *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā*, Sharaf ud-dīn was granted permission to propagate the religious discipline of the *Firdausiyah* order. However, Sharaf ud-dīn implored the Khwāja . "I have not had the opportunity to remain with you even for a few days nor have I had any training of the mystic discipline from you, then, how would I be able to shoulder this onerous responsibility?" But the Khwāja assured him that since the robe of vicegerency has been conferred on him through a divine presage, he would be guided in his path by divine inspiration. Thereafter the Khwāja bade him farewell and said, "Whatever news you get in the way, do not return to me."

Only a few days after Sharaf ud-dīn had betaken the journey, he received the news that Khwāja Najīb ud-dīn had put off his earthly body. However, as already bidden by his mentor, Sharaf ud-dīn continued on his journey to Maner.[1]

State of Love

When Sharaf ud-dīn departed from Khwāja Najīb ud-dīn he felt his heart rent by a disquietude of spritual agony. It appeared that the fire of love, a violent affection of God had

1. *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā*, pp. 132-33

penetrated into the recesses of his very being. He says :

"No sooner than I met Khwāja Najīb ud-dīn, an agonising disquiet seated itself in my heart and it went on increasing with the passage of time."[1]

When Sharaf ud-dīn reached Behiah,[2] he happened to hear the trill of a peacock, which so stirred the feeling of divine love in him that he breathlessly betook himself to a jungle. His brothers and friends, who accompanied him on his way back home, made a vigorous search but could not find any trace of him. At last, they returned with the warrant of vicegerency issued by Khwāja Najib ud-dīn and other sacred relics given to him by the Khwāja and made these over to his mother.[3]

In the Rājgīr Forest

Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn remained in the forest of Behiah but nobody was able to know his whereabouts. Thereafter, he moved on to the Rājgīr[4] forest, where he was seen once or twice but none of his acquaintances ever succeeded in meeting

1. *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā*, p. 133
2. Behiah is about 48 kilometers from Maner, to the west of Arrah in Shahabad district.
3. *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā*, p. 133
4. The Rājgīr hills consist of two parallel ranges which run from south-west to north-east, and seldom exceed 1000 feet in height, are for the most part rocky and covered with a low jungle. (The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. XX, p. 54). The place was identified by Dr. Buchnan-Hamilton with *Rajagriha*, the residence of Buddha and capital of ancient Magadha, and by General Cunningham with *Kusa-Nagarapūra* (the town of Kus grass) visited by Hiuen Tsian, and called by him *Kiu-she-lo-pu-lo*. Hiuen Tsiang gives an account of the hot springs found at this place. Of the five hills, first is identified by General Cunningham as Wehbars mountain of Pali annals, on the side of which was the famous Sattapani Cave, where the first Buddhist synod was held in 543 BC. The second hill Ratnagiri, is that called by Fa Hian 'The Fig Tree Cave' where Buddha meditated. (The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. XXI, Oxford, 1908, p. 72.)

him. The forest and hills of Rājgīr have always been a favourite resort of recluses of India. Gautam Buddha had selected these very forests for his meditations. During the days of Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn's stay in Rājgīr, a number of Hindu *yogīs* and hermits had gone into seclusion to this place. The biographers of Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn have given accounts of the discussions Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn had with these *yogīs*. A closet by the side of a hot water spring, known as Makhūm Kund, can still be seen in this forest.

Althrough the period of twelve years Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn lived in the forest, he had given himself up to austerities, intense meditation and arduous religious observances. Passing his days in a state marked by excitation of heart, agitation and bewilderment, he appears to have totally lost the consciousness of his own self by drinking deep the cup of love divine. The leaves of the trees were all he ate in those days. Speaking of the most austere acts to which he had given himself up in those days, he once told his disciple Qāzī Zāhid : "The mortifications I had undergone would have melted even the hills, but of what use had these been to Sharaf ud-dīn."[1] It seems that he was not satisfied with the utility of what he had achieved by these arduous disciplines. Once he said that during the winter season, when it was biting cold, he took bath in cold water instead of taking advantage of the leave granted by the *Sharī'ah* for such occasions, and the result was that he fell unconscious and missed the dawn prayer.

Stay in Bihar

During the days Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn was still residing in the Rājgīr forests, a disciple of Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn Aulīā' bearing the name of his mentor but known as Maulānā Nizām Maulā, came to know about Sharaf ud-dīn from certain persons who had met the Sheikh in that forest. He met Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn along with a few of his disciples. Greatly impressed by

1. *Sīrat-us-Sharaf*, p. 72

the Sheikh, Maulānā Nizām Maulā often used to repair to the jungle to visit the Sheikh In view of the inconvenience Maulānā Nizām Maulā and his friends had to put up, Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn suggested to them: "Your visit causes me a lot of anxiety for the forest is too dangerous. You people should better remain in the city where I would come on Fridays for prayers and meet you." The proposal was accepted and the Sheikh thus used to have a brief sitting with Maulānā Nizām Maulā and others on each Friday. After some time, the admirers of the Sheikh decided to construct a hut at the place the monastery exists now, where Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn used to take rest for a while after Friday prayers or stayed for a day or two sometimes. Maulānā Nizām Maulā got the thatched hut converted into a building. When the construction was completed Maulānā Nizām Maulā invited his friends to a feast and requested Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn to grace the altar carpet. The Sheikh accepted the request but remarked: "Friends, your rendezvous has led me to this pantheon."[1]

The monastery was constructed between 721 to 724 A. H. during the reign of Ghiyāth ud-dīn Tughlaq.[2]

Sultān Muhammad Tughlaq ascended the throne after his father in 725 A. H. Himself an accomplished scholar, he was always too desirous of making the *sufi* saints come out of their seclusion for bringing about moral upliftment of the populace. He forced Khwāja Nāsīr ud-dīn *Chiragh Dehli* to accompany his forces in his last expedition. He also forced other disciples of Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn Auliā', Maulāna Fakhr ud-dīn Zarrādī, Maulānā Shams ud-dīn Yahyā and others, to deliver sermons and urge the people to participate in the holy wars. He even made Sheikh Qutb ud-dīn Munawwar of Hansī to come all the way from his monastery to Delhi. When he came to know of Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn's abandoning his seclusion after years of retirement in the Rājgīr forests, he sent an order to the

1. *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā*, p. 134
2. *Sirat-us-Sharaf*, p. 81

Governor of Bihar, Majad-ul-Mulk, that a monastery should be got constructed for him and the pargana of Rājgīr given to him for the upkeep of the monastery and his disciples. The king sent a Balghārian[1] prayer-mat to the Sheikh and ordered the Governor to force Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn to accept the royal grant, in case he was not inclined to accept the offer.

Majad-ul-Mulk took the imperial edict to the Sheikh and said, "I dare not force your honour to do what the King has ordered but if you do not accept his offer, it would be construed as my insubordination and incompetence. Everybody is aware of the King's temperament and only God knows what he would do with me." Taking pity on the perplexity of Majad-ul-Mulk, the Sheikh yielded to his request, albeit unwillingly, but when Fīroz Shāh Tughlaq mounted the throne, he returned the Jāgīr.[1] However, the construction of the monastery was taken in hand, and, to borrow the words of Zamīr ud-dīn in *Sīrat-us-Sharaf*:

"The construction of the monastery was started and it was completed within a short period. Majad-ul-Mulk invited all the mystics and disciples of Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn Auliā[2] and numerous other friars for a sitting of musical recitation which continued for pretty long time in the assembly hall. In another portion of the monastery, containing a gallery and a room, arrangements were made for seating the elite. On the Balghārian prayer-mat sent by the King, Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī was seated. When a wandering friar who happened to be there came near Sharaf ud-dīn, the latter said: 'It's all for you. I had simply to comply with the orders of Majad-ul-Mulk, for I had no choice but to obey him who wields the authority. Whatever you see here is for the mendicants and, so far as I am concerned, I do not consider myself even worthy of Islam, much less to grace this prayer-mat.'

"The mendicant replied: 'Makhdūm, who cares for this monastery and the prayer-mat? Whatever respect one pays

1 A town in the north of Turkistān

2. *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā*, p. 135

to you, it is because of the Truth. We have come here on account of your latent spiritual qualities and for your sake alone. Islam will flourish here and gain strength through your blessings.' To this Makhdūm Sharaf ud-dīn Yahyā Manerī replied: 'Whatever these mendicants say finds the acceptance of God.' Then he added: 'Whoever is himself a Prince commands and the task is accomplished.' "

Spiritual Guidance of the People

For more than half a century (from 724 A.H. to 782 A.H., when he died) Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī continued to inspire spiritual and moral zeal in the people. According to the estimate of Sheikh Husain Mu'iz Shams of Balakh, more than a hundred thousand persons united themselves in the bond of his spiritual paternity of whom not less than three hundred attained spiritual illumination and reached the highest degrees of sanctity. Numerous *yogis*, it is related, were guided by him on the path of mysticism after they had embraced Islam at his hands. The congregations held by the Sheikh, which were attended by persons drawn from all creeds and classes, as was the custom prevailing in those days, served as lecture rooms providing guidance and instruction to the people. Persons desiring an exposition of perplexing issues, raised questions in these meetings and got satisfactory answers. These gatherings never had any predetermined subject for discussion or discourse; the *sufis* began their sermons on whatever issue they happened to be contemplating or the topic raised by others. But, almost always these discourses shed light on the hidden meanings of recondite truths and intricate problems of mysticism. Zain Badr 'Arabī, who has compiled the discourses of Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn, says in his introduction to the collection: "In every gathering and almost on each occasion, the disciples of the Sheikh or others attending the meetings requested him to elucidate a certain issue pertaining to the *Shari'oh* or mystic discipline. Hazrat Makhdūm replied to every question in a very pleasant and convincing manner, and expounded the pith and essence of the facts of mute

reality. He answered the questions according to the ability of the inquirer in such a bright and cheerful way that it agreeably occupied the mind of the listeners and adumbrated those subtle facts which are beyond the grasp of human senses."[1]

Sometimes a theological or mystic tract was read in these gatherings. Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī used to throw light upon points of special difficulty during the course of such readings. In this way he used to expound intricate issues pertaining to jurisprudence, Traditions, exegesis and mysticism which were found instructive even by the learned disciples. Another method employed by him for the mental and moral development of his disciples, especially the learned ones, was to write them letters. Perhaps no other spiritual guide, except Mujadid Alf Thānī, has taken recourse to this educative medium for the mental edification and spiritual ennoblement of the people. The forceful style of Makhdūm's writings, combining grace and elegance, assigns a conspicuous place to his letters in the theological literature. In these he has expounded the kernels or factors of higher significance denoting the inner sense of unseen divine content of things. He exerted thereby a strong and potent influence and inspired the people with a longing to attain the state of exalted spiritual integrity. In their effectiveness, gracefulness and forcefulness of expression there would perhaps be few compositions worthy of comparison with these letters in the entire Persian literature. Thus, in addition to those fortunate persons to whom these letters were addressed, thousands have read them with interest down the centuries after the days of Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī; in the monasteries these letters have been studiously perused and discussed, and they still hold the attention of those who muse over them in search of the new dimensions of intuitive insight and illumination of heart. It would be difficult to exaggerate the strength and vigour of these letters which, notwithstanding the lapse of several centuries when they were written, still preserve their freshness and emotional appeal.

1. *Maʿadan-ul-Maʿānī*

IV

Character and Deportment

A conspicuous trait of Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī's sublime character was the annihilation of his self in love—the reward of his austere devotional acts and religious travails—reflecting a deep, satisfying and intimate love which effaces the very existence of the lover. Every word of his letters and discourses signifies the earnest desire and passionate love of God thus described by Khwāja Naqshband: "What I desire most is to have no desire at all."

This was the patrimony of the mystic order founded by Khwāja Najm ud-dīn Kubrā, whose most worthy successor was Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn Yahyā Manerī.

Shuʿaib Firdausī relates that in a meeting of celebrated *sufi* saints every one expressed the desire cherished by him. When the turn of Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī came, he said: "What I desire is that I should remain unknown in this world as well as in the world beyond."

Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī once gave expression to his own self-abandonment in these words: "Wholly overtaken by the illusions of Satan, I know neither anything about my own self nor find any trace of Islam in me."

In a letter which Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī wrote to a friend, he laid emphasis on the importance of shedding tears over one's own vicious self. The letter, quoted here, perhaps throws light on the conflagration consuming his own heart.

"The gnostics swear to God that nothing is dearer to God than bewailing of a man over the failings of his own self: therefore, let us learn how to lament and bemoan from the precursor of true faith, Khwāja Owais Qarnī, whose soul may be blessed by God. He who laments not always over his own self, O brother, is a claimant oblivious of the Day of Requital; he is just a dead meat whose heart is crushed by his longings. And what wistful longings have cast their shadows over every heart: everybody yearns for glory and riches, authority and power, pleasure and satisfaction, fame and honour and, along with all these, propinquity to God as well. But, by God, this is impossible."[1]

Another letter written by Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī to show the way of self demolition depicts his own portrait, for, the mystic saints were not hypocrites to preach what they themselves did not practise. Since they strictly followed the Quranic injunction: "Never say what you do not practise yourself," this letter must have been written by Makhdūm after attaining the entelechy of spiritual life.

"Since you have reached the threshold of your Lord, your self should be cleansed of all earthly defilements and desires. Even if you don a thousand crowns of royalty, how would you conceal the reality of your self—your beggarly countenance and forlorn complexion. Dust that settles over a thing gets always washed away: but the gloominess of your subliminal self can never change itself."[2]

In yet another letter he plainly laments thus over himself:

"We are ill-starred, afflicted and abased; greedy as hogs, we are mad after our desires; attuned to force of habit, we are the negligent and heedless who witlessly move in a groove; we are really listless and thoughtless; and our presumption that we follow *Tawhīd* or that we tread the path of God-moved souls is simply an indication of our temerity and crass ignorance. Even the Jews and fire-worshippers, cathedrals and pantheons feel

1. 11th letter
2. 27th letter

ashamed of us."[1]

A supplication often recited by him expresses, in all intensity and colour, his innermost thoughts and feelings.

A weakling in Thy path I am, my God ;
Like a crippled ant, in a well I plod.
Without any achievement, strength or wealth ;
I have neither the heart to bewail nor patience to repose.
Deprived of faith, even the world took leave of me ;
Impoverished of the soul, I cling to exterior form.
Neither a Muslim nor a heathen, I waver in minds two ;
Forlorn and abandoned, I know not what to do.
I shed tears and bemoan a lot, my Lord.
Empty-handed that I am, burdensome is the task.
In this prison of bodily frame, I have suffered a lot ;
Feckles has been made by exertion my labouring heart.
Fettered I sit in this prison (of desires and sins) ;
Who else save Thee can give me a helping hand.
Clear the obstacles (that block the) path of my soul ;
And let my heart be cleansed through flood of tears.
On Thy path I have set my foot, though immersed in sin ;
Mercy, my God, though I hail from the prison of sin.

Having arrived at the point of annihilation which effaces the existence of the lover, he was unconcerned with the acclamation and condemnation of the people. In a letter he says :

"What have the ecstatics to lose or gain by the adulation or denunciation of the multitude? To them these make little difference. They do not consider him worthy who is acclaimed by the people nor a fellow villified by the masses is regarded by them as wicked : to them only he is virtuous who meets the approval of the Lord and only he is vile who is censured by God."

1. 31st letter

As a natural outcome of his intoxication and losing his self in love divine, he was rewarded with miraculous powers like other ecstatics. Incessant miracles were worked by him but he ever entertained an aversion for miracles or the exhibition of similar other acts which could be adduced as a proof of his attaining the heights of sanctity. Shuʿaib Firdausī writes in *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā*:

"His miraculous powers very often called forth wonderful acts clearly beyond the operation of natural laws, but he was always so averse to miracles that he pleaded his incompetence to perform such acts. If anybody insisted upon his help for the fulfilment of his needs he used to refer him to Mīrān Jalāl Diwānā."[1]

This was the time when credulous masses considered the miraculous powers possessed by a saint as the only touchstone of his sanctity and godliness. It is reported that once a few persons brought some dead flies to him and said: "A well-known maxim runs: the Sheikh bestows life and death. Therefore, cause these flies to come to life again." Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī replied: "I am myself helpless. How can I restore life to others?"

Excellent Morals

The inspiration drawn by the *sufi* saints from the prophetic light has ever been the most vital element in shaping the life and character of these men of God: the warmth of personal feeling for a prophet thus praised by God; 'Lo! Thou art of excellent character,'[2] linked them to him by a close personal affinity which transfigures all thoughts and governs all actions. It was this loving regard of Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī for the Prophet of Islam which has been testified in these words by his biographer: "The moral conduct of Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn was the very image of the Prophet's character."[3]

1. *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā*, p. 137
2. Q. LXVIII: 4
3. *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā*, p. 137

And how much Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī considered it essential to cast one's morals and behaviour in the mould of Prophet's character is revealed by his letters which, in fact, bring forth his own moral precepts and rules of conduct.

"In truth and reality virtuous conduct consists of the moral code followed by the learned among the followers of mystic path. They adhere to the injunctions of the *Sharīʿah* and measure the excellence of their performance with the yardstick of Prophet's conduct. Whosoever does not make a search for the rules of the *Sharīʿah* can never hope to attain anything through the path of mysticism."[1]

In another letter he says that "the more one follows the path chalked out by the *Sharīʿah*, the more one becomes virtuous in conduct; and the more one attains moral excellence, the more one is loved by God. For moral rectitude is the bequest of Adam and a gift from God, there is nothing goodlier for the believer than virtuous code of conduct nor an adornment as exquisite as this. Good moral conduct really means acting on the precepts of God and the *Sharīʿah* brought by His Prophet; for, the behaviour and deportment of the Prophet, on whom be peace and blessings, were winsomely pleasing. Whoever claims to follow the Prophet, should pattern his life after him."[2]

The life sketch of Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī depicted by his biographers shows that the constant aim of his endeavours was to follow the Prophet of Islam. In moral conduct and behaviour, brotherly love and compassion for his fellow beings, regard for the interests of other people and in consoling the broken-hearted he had all the earmarks of the Prophet's character.

Kindliness

He possessed a kindliness of heart that extended to all men, whether friends or foes, in prosperity or in distress. In a letter written by him he calls it an inborn virtue and motivating

1. 59th letter
2. *Ibid*

power of the gnostics and men of God, perhaps, because he had himself imbibed this quality in the journey of his spirit. Depicting the characteristics of a true mystic he says :

"Like the glorious lamp of the heaven his benevolence goes out to all, young and old ; he remains hungry and unclad but feeds and clothes others. He cares not for the injustice done to him nor for the malevolence of those who are hard upon him. Instead, he intercedes for them, repays goodness for evil and gives thanks for abuses. Do you know why does he do so? Being himself saved and secured, his heart is filled with a desire to do good to all. Like the sun which shines over mountains and vales, his benevolence encompasses friends and foes alike ; in humility he is like the earth trodden by all ; in generosity he is like the river whose lofty surge benefits the friends as well as enemies. Independent of every attachment, the downpour of his benignity showers over the East as much as over the West. He finds everything indwelling in God as manifestations of the same Creator and endued with qualities assigned by Him. Whoever lacks these qualities of spirit cannot lay a claim to be a traveller on the path of mysticism."[1]

Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī was, like other mystic preceptors, an embodiment of charity and benevolence. Overflowing with the milk of humanity he considered it a grievous sin to injure the feelings of others.

Once, when he was keeping a voluntary fast, a certain person brought some present and begged him to partake it. Makhdūm took it and said : "One can make up for the broken fast but not for the broken heart."

He always concealed the blemish of others and if he was ever told of the lapse or misdemeanour of someone, he immediately came out with an explanation on behalf of the person reported to have committed the misdeed.

It has been related in *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā* that once he had to join a congregational prayer led by a man who was a drunkard.

1. 24th letter

Somebody complained about it but Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī replied: "He should not be drunk all the time." The complainant said: "Yes, he ever remains drunk." "But not during Ramadhan," was the reply given by Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī.[1]

Severance of Worldly Ties

Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī had reached the stage where the heart is so full of Divine love that it displaces the love of everything else.

He had accepted the *jāgīr* granted by Sultān Muhammad Tughlaq in order to save Majad-ul-Mulk from the wrath of the Sultān. He returned the *jāgīr* as soon as Sultān Fīroz Shāh Tughlaq ascended the throne. If the story related by Zamīr ud-dīn in *Sīrat-us-Sharaf* on the authority of *Mūnis-ul-Qulūb* is correct, Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī went all the way from Maner to Delhi to return the royal edict granting the fief to him and thereafter he never took any interest in the extension or renovation of the monastery Sultān Muhammad Tughlaq got constructed for him.

Sheikh Hamīd ud-dīn was a close friend of Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī. Once he came to Makhdūm in the midnight. Makhdūm came out and sat down in the courtyard with him. After a while Sheikh Hamīd ud-dīn said, "The courtyard will look nice if this platform is extended. Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī immediately got up and replied, "I thought that you had come in the dead of night to seek solution of some religious problem but I find that I was wrong. You want the platform to be extended. Actually you ought to have suggested that this idol-house should be brought to ruins."[2]

Lofty Ideals

The lofty ideals worthy of a life's endeavour upon which

1. *Manāqib-ul-Asfiā*, p. 141
2. *Sīrat-us-Sharaf*, p. 123

Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī had always had his eyes set, were the spur that made him achieve true piety of the soul. This is amply borne out by his letters to his friends and disciples whom he always told that only those whose aims were worthy, aspirations high, designs wise and purposes steadfast could hope to reach the goal of a soaring ambition. Here is a letter in which he wrote to one of his disciples:

"Howsoever spiritless you might be, my brother, you ought to have courage to look upward. There is nothing in the world that can dampen the eager desire of a man: the lofty aspirations of man are really too burdensome even for the earth and heaven, empyrean and the mighty Throne, heaven and hell; and that is why a poet says:

Neither fear they hell nor long for heaven;
Made of a special texture is this group of men.
They have their grip on the Divine Being;
Whatever else is there, is below their feet.
Unless the way is swept with the broom of *Not*;
How can ye find a way to the mansion of God.

"The exalted ideal of a man of God needs the height of heavens and the space of universe for its flight of ambition, and there is nothing more lofty and consecrated than the ambition to attain the gnosis of Supreme Being. The ambition of these God-moved souls does not perambulate round the Kaʿaba or *Bait-ul-Muqaddas* nor does it limit its flight to the heaven and earth. Holiness be to God: What a noble task is this! The man is sitting with his feet on the ground, his head resting on his knees, but the height of his ambition passes beyond the limits of universe. What a lofty aspiration is this that no other created being except man made of water and clay can fancy."[1]

Zamīr ud-dīn has made a correct assessment of Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī's lofty and insatiable ambition in *Sīrat-us-Sharof*. "He had," says Zamīr ud-dīn, "always his gaze fixed on what was still to be achieved, for whatever he had already achieved

1. 4th letter

lost its importance in his eyes. His soaring ambition and courage always spurred him to attain still higher and higher stages of sanctity."

And he desired that others too should have the same courage and lofty aspiration. In a latter he says :

"Supposing both the worlds were brought at your threshold and you were told that all these belong to you, and that you might do whatever you like with them. You should, however, be careful not to lose sight of that which is beyond this world and the next and which constitutes the only means to reach the Real Beloved. This is why the gnostics have said :

This world is a torment and the other one an snare of avarice ;
I shall never have the two, even if an oat were their price."

In another letter he advised his disciples :

"Verily, the dauntless spirit of resolution encompasses everything ; whereas indetermination allows everything to fall out. This is a matter of primary importance for adopting the means to reach the real goal."

Separation and Isolation

In their swift flight of the spirit the ecstatics soar to those higher domains of spirituality which are completely beyond the reach of the uninitiated. It is difficult even to conceive of the effulgence of Divine love and the source of knowledge which is laid open before them. Leading a cloistered life within the society, their spirits are roving when they appear to be quiescent. To those who have never had the opportunity to betake the path of mysticism, the ecstatics appear to be engaged in the edification and guidance of their followers—a task imposed on them as the vicegerents of the Prophet—but the stages through which they have to pass before attaining the perfection of interior spirit can be made known only by those who have already attained inward illumination. Renunciation of the worldly desires is considered by some as the only essential discipline for the real cognition of

Divine Essence, but in the passage quoted here Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī explains some of its higher stages through which the gnostics have to find their way before attaining their cherished goal. He says: "*Separation* involves renunciation of all worldy desires and relationships whereas *isolation* means that the lover is isolated from all, including his own self, to attain propinquity with the Beloved. Without a care to trouble his heart, or a concern dependent on interest, or a solicitude involving an element of desire, or anxiety to distract his attention, his aspiration soars high beyond the empyrean to meet his longed-for Beloved. He feels no pleasure without his Beloved even if this world and the world beyond were placed at his feet, nor has he any longing for the earth or heavens in the presence of his True-love. Someone has truly said that with God there is no anxiety and without God there is no pleasure. That is why it has been asserted by the gnostics that whoever is away from God is afflicted even though he may hold the key of the treasures of all the lands; while a penniless mendicant having communion with God is the king of both the worlds even if he hasn't enough to fill his belly."[1]

In another letter he writes:[2]

"The Friend is nigh even if he is away and the stranger is away even if he be present with you. But this would happen only when you abandon the world and attain the reality of your own self, and cast off your heart as did the companions of the cave. You should make the heart a cave for thyself, offer your funeral prayers therein and throw away the animality of your desires out of your inmost self. Only then the secrets of spiritual realm will be manifested unto you as was done to the companions of the cave. (Then you would witness what has been stated thus in the Qur'ān):

"If thou hadst observed them closely thou hadst assuredly turned away from them in flight, and hadst been filled

1. Letter No 72
2. *Sīrat-us-Sharaf*, p. 144

with awe of them."[1]

Enjoining the Right Course

Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī had renounced all worldly desires and relationships and passed beyond the stages of *separation* and *isolation*, which meant abandonment of all cares and worries, but he was, nevertheless, always solicitous of the welfare of the poor and afflicted. We find him corresponding with the then sovereigns to restore justice to whom it had been denied and asking the kings and rulers to betake the path of virtue and equity.

One Khwāja ʿĀbid of Zafarābād, who had been deprived of his property, approached Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī. He wrote a letter to Sultān Fīroz Shāh Sharqī in which he first quoted the Traditions of the Prophet and his companions expressing concern to see that justice is done to everybody. Thereafter he wrote:

"Thanks be to God that today he graces the throne who is the hope of the oppressed and the miserable and who is handing out even justice to everyone. It is for this sublime trait that the Prophet has said that 'a moment spent in dispensing justice is better than sixty years given out to prayers.' "[2]

Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī had received his education at Sonārgaon and therefore he was particularly interested in the affairs of Bengal and the welfare of Muslims in that region. A letter written by Maulānā Muzaffar of Balakh to Sultān Ghiyāth ud-dīn of Bengal shows how keenly interested was Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī in the well-being of Bengal. He says: "I find Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn always extremely eager for the prosperity of this country. Of a fact, God has favoured this land with the presence of this 'Legion of the Lord' on its soil."[3]

1. Q. XVIII: 18
2. *Sīrat-us-Sharaf*, p. 144
3. *Ibid.*, p. 125

Following the Prophet

The wayfarers of the path of purity come to know, as they proceed ahead on their spiritual journey, how essential it is to follow the example of the Prophet in its minutest detail. Also, the reality dawns on them that the mystic state of composure can never be reached without following the Prophet wholeheartedly and adapting one's life in complete harmony with the way of the *Sharī'ah*. How convinced was Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī of this essential doctrine of mysticism can be seen from his letter given here. He begins it with a quotation from the Qur'ān:

"Say, (O Muhammad to mankind): If ye love Allah, follow me, Allah will love you."[1] These words of God put a seal on the truth thus expressed by someone.

Seek not a new path, his word is gospel,
Seal your lips and stop all prattle.
Whate'er says he, saith the Lord,
Whate'er he does, is an act of God,
Be dust unto him to wear the crown,
To have your way, first knuckle down.
Like the dust of his way, if not is he,
He'll lick the dust, even if an angel be he.

"This shows that those foolish and ignorant people who do not follow in the footsteps of the Prophet out of their vanity, ignorance or immodesty, can never find the glimpse of enlightenment. Verily, it is impossible to find the correct way to the higher domains of spirituality without a guide. That is why someone has said—the blind can never find his way without a staff in hand; the way is long and full of hazards, therefore, have a pathfinder, O lad."[2]

Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī followed this rule scruplously all through his life. The day he died, at the age of one hundred and twentyone years, he performed the last ablution, despite his illness and weakness, as graphically described by Sheikh Zain

1. Q. III : 31
2. 50th letter

Badr ᶜArabī.

"He took off his gown and asked for water, rolled up his sleeves and cleansed his teeth. Thereafter he started performing ablution with the prayer: 'I begin in the name of God, the most Compassionate, the most Merciful.' He recited different prayers before beginning to wash different parts of his body. When he was washing his elbows, Sheikh Khalīl reminded him that he had forgotten to wash his face. He then began the ablution afresh, performing every act even more carefully. Qāzī Zāhid tried to help him in washing the right foot, but he forbade him. After performing the ablution, he asked for a comb and prayer mat. Having combed his beard he performed two *rakᶜats* of prayer."[1]

Because of his ardent desire to follow the example of the Prophet, he abhorred every innovation in religion. He was so careful in this regard that once he instructed his disciples:

"Whenever you find that any action of the Prophet has been so mixed up with an innovation that your action can be construed as acting on the innovation, then it is better to forgo the action to follow the Prophet instead of doing something that strengthens the innovation in religion."[2]

1. *Wafāt Nāmah*, p. 12
2. *Khwan Pur Niᶜāmat.*

V

On the Death-bed

The description of the life and spiritual attainments of Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn Makhdūm Yahya Manerī left by his contemporaries and biographers are far too mearge to bring out in any detail all of his qualities of mind and heart. Nevertheless, even if these sketchy accounts were not available, the vivid portrayal of Makhdūm's departure from this fleeting world given by his chief disciple and spiritual successor, Sheikh Zain Badr ᶜArabī, who was in the service of his mentor all through the period, would have been sufficient to leave an unforgettable impression of this prince among the men of God. The biographical literature of the Muslim saints and the elects contains graphic accounts of their deaths portraying the greatness of these souls, their strong attachment to God and the intensity of their faith and conviction, which, by the same token, furnish a proof of the highest reaches of religion to which Islam is capable of elevating the mortals. Also, the Muslim annalists are unique in preserving the death-bed accounts of their co-religionists in such large numbers which are not only faith inspiring but also provide a glimpse of the inmost recesses of these men at the most critical moment of their life.

The description of Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī's last moments under the shadow of death would show the strengh of his faith in God, his vigilant care to follow the path of *Sharīᶜah*, his anxiety for the welfare of Islam and its followers, his confidence

in the mercy of God and his concern for the salvation of his own soul. Sheikh Zain Badr ʿArabī writes: "It was Wednesday, the 5th of Shawwāl, 782 A. H. when I went to pay my respect to the Sheikh. He was sitting on a carpet, leaning against a pillow, after performing the dawn prayers in the new room constructed by Nizām ud-dīn Khwāja Malik. His brother Sheikh Jalīl ud-dīn, Qāzī Shams ud-dīn and several other relations and disciples who had been attending him all through the previous night were present there. The Sheikh said: 'There is no power, no might but from Allah, the Great' and asked us to join in the recital. After a while he said smilingly: 'Holiness be to God. Even at this moment the devil still wants to create doubts in my mind about the Unity of God but to no avail.' He kept himself busy in the praise of God, often repeating joyfully: 'It is a favour from my Lord, it is a favour from my Lord.'

"An hour or so before noon the Sheikh came out in the courtyard and sat down on a carpet taking the support of a pillow. He held out his hands as if he wanted to bid farewell to us. First came forward Qāzī Shams ud-dīn whose hands he kept holding for a while. Taking the hands of Qāzī Zāhid, he placed them on his chest and said: 'We are the same lovelorn. But no, we are not better than the earth beneath their feet.' He summoned all of us turn by turn, kissed our hands and beards, bade us to pin our hopes in the mercy and forgiveness of God saying: 'Despair not of the mercy of Allah, Who forgiveth all sins.'[1]

"And then he recited the verses which meant:

O God, stream of thy mercy flows for all,
Only a drop from it is all I want.

"Then, turning to us, he began reciting the Creed:

'I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah, Who is without a partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Apostle.....I am agreeable to Allah as our

1. Q. XXXIX: 53

Lord, Islam as our religion, Muhammad as our Prophet, Qur'ān as our canon, Ka'abah as our *Qiblah*, the believers as our brothers, Heaven as the reward and Hell as the punishment (by God).'

"Thereafter he called up several of us one by one. Some he encouraged and comforted with the hope of deliverance on the Day of Judgement; others he asked never to abandon hope in the mercy of God and to be careful of their faith.

"I stepped ahead and kissed his hands. Thereupon he asked: 'Who is it?' 'It is a beggar at your threshold,' said I, 'desirous of being accepted as thy serf.' He replied, 'I accept you and your entire household. If God helps me I shall never forsake you.'

"You are our mentor," I said again, "while I expect even your servants to be in the good grace of God."

"Yes, there is much to be hoped," he replied.

"By that time Qāzī Shams ud-dīn came up to him. Maulānā Sahāb ud-dīn Hilāl asked, 'Makhdūm, what about Qāzī Shams ud-dīn? He is here.' He replied, 'What have I to say about him. He is my son and brother. I have already conferred on him the habit of medicants. It was only for his sake that I wrote so much, otherwise who would have cared to write all this.'

"Then he turned to Sheikh Khalīl ud-dīn and said, 'Take heart, Khalīl. Scholars and friars shall never turn their backs upon you. When Malik Nizām ud-dīn Khwāja comes to you, convey my respects to him and tell him that I am departing from the world well pleased with him. He will never forsake you.' Sheikh Khalīl ud-dīn gave way to tears but Makdūm consoled him. In the meantime other disciples and attendants came to pay their respect. For each he invoked divine blessings and commended them to have faith in the benignity and forgiveness of God. Sultān Shāh, the administrator of pargana Rājgīr, brought some medicine for him but Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī declined to accept the present and returned it with thanks.

"Amīr Shahāb ud-dīn came to pay a visit with his son.

Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī asked the boy to recite any five verses of the Qur'ān but the boy being too young could not recite the verses. Another boy, son of Saiyid Zahīr ud-dīn, was also present at the time and he recited the last portion of *Surat-ul-Fath*. As soon as the boy began reciting the Qur'ān, Makhdūm got up to sit in a reverential posture.

"The time for afternoon prayer was drawing near. Makhdūm took off his gown and asked to fetch water for him. He rolled up the sleeves of his shirt, cleansed his teeth and started performing ablution in the name of God. He carefully recited the different supplications prescribed for each act but forgot to wash his face. On being reminded, he started the ablution afresh. The ablution completed, he asked for a comb and prayer mat, combed his beard and performed two *rak'ats* of prayer. He took a little rest after the prayer and then performed the *maghrib* (evening) prayer.

"Feeling exhausted, Makhdūm lay down on a cot surrounded by his disciples and friends. After relaxing for a few minutes, he started reciting :

> I begin in the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
>
> There is no God save Thee. Be Thou Glorified ! Lo ! I have been a wrong-doer.[1]
>
> I begin in the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
>
> I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah Who is without a partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Apostle.
>
> There is no power, no might but from Allah, the most High, the Great.

"Thereafter he repeated the formula : 'I begin in the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful' several times and came out with all his heart : 'Muhammad.....Muhammad..... Muhammad.....O Allah ! Shower Thy blessings on Muhammad

1. Q. XXI : 87

and the descendants of Muhammad.'

"This he followed up with the recitation of the following verses of *Suratul-Mā'ida* :

O Allah, Lord of us ! Send down for us a table spread with food from heaven, that it may be a feast for us, for the first of us and for the last of us, and a sign from Thee. Give us sustenance, for Thou art the Best of Sustainers.

Allah said : Lo ! I send it down for you. And whoso disbelieveth of you afterward, him surely will I punish with a punishment wherewith I have not punished any of (My) creatures.

And when Allah saith : O Jesus, son of Mary ! Didst thou say unto mankind : Take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah? he saith : Be glorified ! It was not mine to utter that to which I had no right. If I used to say it, then Thou knowest it. Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I know not what is in Thy Mind. Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Knower of Things Hidden ?

I speak unto them only that which Thou commanded me, (saying) : Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. I was a witness of them while I dwelt among them, and when Thou tookest me Thou wast the Watcher over them. Thou art Witness over all things.

If Thou punish them, lo ! they are Thy slaves, and if Thou forgive them (lo ! they are Thy slaves). Lo ! Thou, only Thou, art the Mighty, the Wise.

Allah saith : This is a day in which their truthfulness profiteth the truthful, for theirs are Gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they are secure for ever, Allah taking pleasure in them and they in Him. That is the great triumph.

Unto Allah belongeth the Sovereignty of heavens and the earth and whatsoever is therein, and He is Able to do all things.[1]

1. Q. V : 114-120

"And then he began to declaim: 'I am agreeable with Allah as our Lord, Islam as our relgion and Muhammad as our Prophet.'

He recited thrice the creed of Muslim faith from the bottom of his heart and then began the invocation:

O Lord our God guide the followers of Muhammad (on the right path); O Allah, have mercy on the followers of Muhammad; O Allah, forgive the followers of Muhammad, O Allah, be lenient to the followers of Muhammad; O Allah, help the followers of Muhammad; O Allah, uphold him who stands by the religion of Muhammad; O Allah, increase the followers of Muhammad and let them not decrease; O Allah, debase those who wish to humiliate the religion of Muhammad, on whom be Thy blessings, O Most-Merciful.

"With these words his voice failed but he continued to recite:

There shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve.....There is no deity but Allah.....I begin in the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

"No sooner had he uttered the last word his soul took flight to its celestial abode.

"This was the night of Thursday, the 6th of Shawwāl, 782 A. H. when the time for *'ishā'* prayer had just begun,"[1]

The death of Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī answers description of the last journey of a sublimated soul portrayed beautifully by Ibn Yamīnī in these verses.

Don't see the heart of Ibn Yamīnī dipped in blood;
Lo! when he bid farewell to this fleeting world.
Scripture in hand, foot on stirrup and eyes fixed on the friend,
With a smile on his lips, he set off with the angel of death.

Funeral Service

The funeral prayer was led by Sheikh Ashraf Jahāngīr

1. *Wafāt Nāmah.*

Samnānī. As related in *Lata'if Ashrafī*[2], the bier of Makhdūm was kept on the way as instructed by him. Sheikh Ashraf Jahāngīr, on his way from Delhi to Pandwah in Bengal, where he was going to pay a visit to the renowned Chishtiyah Sheikh 'Alā' ul-Haq of Lahore, arrived at Bihar Sharīf just when the bier had been placed there for someone to come and lead the funeral service as desired by the departing mentor. Sheikh Ashraf Jahāngīr Samnānī led the funeral service and lowered the bier in the grave.[1]

The grave was made of mud and unburnt bricks, and no dome was built on it. During the reign of Sūrī dynasty, a mosque, a tank and some residential apartments were constructed round the grave but no tomb with stones and burnt bricks was built in deference to the injunctions of *Sharī'ah* followed so meticulously by Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī.

Disciples

Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī left, according to *Sīrat-us-Sharaf*, more than a hundred thousand souls who had taken oath of allegiance to him but notwithstanding the possible exaggeration by Syed Zamīr ud-dīn, there is no doubt that a very large number of people were spiritually united with him. Of these, the number of those who had been endowed with inward illumination of the soul runs into hundreds.

Writings

The list of works reported to have been put into writing by Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī is quite extensive but, unfortunately, only a few of these survive today. The books still preserved are : *Rāhat ul-Qulūb*, *'Ajwebā, Fawā'id-i-Ruknī, Irshād ul-Tālbīn, Irshād ul-Sālkīn, Risālah Makkiyah, Ma'adan ul-Ma'ānī, Ishārāt-i-Mukh-ul-Ma'ānī, Khwān Pur Ni'amat, Tuhfah-i-Ghaibī, Risālah Dar*

1. A biography of Sheikh Ashraf Jahāngīr Samnānī by his disciple Nizām-ud-dīn Yamīnī, alias Nizām Haji Gharīb-ul-Yaminī.
2. *Latā'if Ashrafī*, p. 94

Talab-i-Tālibān, *Malfūzāt*, *Zād-i-Safar*, *ʿAqaʾid-i-Sharafī*, *Fawāʾid Murīdīn*, *Bahr-ul-Maʿānī*, *Safar-ul-Muzaffar*, *Kanz-ul-Maʿānī*, *Ganj-i-Lāyafna*, *Mūnis-ul-Marīdīn* and *Sharah Adāb-ul-Murīdīn*.[1] However, still more significant composition bearing witness to his literary gifts and giving an insight into the inner light of his spirituality is the collection of his letters compiled under the name of *Maktūbāt-i-Seh Sadī*.

1. *Sīrat-us-Sharaf* and *Nuzhat-ul-Khawātir*

VI

Makhdum's Letters

A living monument of Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī reflecting his deep knowledge and spiritual enlightenment is the collection of his letters. In their depth of ideas, remarkable critical expression, exposition of subtle issues, acuteness of observation, correct understanding of the spirit of religion, insight in the revealed truth and light of divine knowledge along with the single-minded devotion to God and veneration of the Prophet, the letters of Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī and Mujadid Alf Thānī occupy a place of distinction in the Islamic literature. These letters show the sublimity of intuitive vision and the exalted spiritual integrity of their writers who have successfully unfolded the living seed of faith in God, intuitively grasped ideas, the aids to purification of self, and the methods of stimulating and enriching the spiritual life. They give us a glimpse of the lofty domains of spirituality to which these men of God had gained an access.

But apart from exhibiting an insight into the contents of spirit and religion, these letters written in a direct and limpid style without sacrificing elegance and grace have all the simplicity of a great art, and contain passages that can take their place among the masterpieces of literature in any language of the world. It is, however, an irony of fate that the compositions of only those have been acknowledged as falling within the purview of literature who had exclusively devoted themselves to

the pursuit of *belles-lettres* or the literary art, that is, aesthetic rather than informative or scientific branches of learning. In the bygone ages normally the court amanuenses or those writers who displayed their linguistic attainments through rhetorical ingenuities gained recognition as litterateurs. The result of it was that in the history of Arabic literature ʿAbdul Hamīd al-Kātib, Abū Is'hāq as-Sābī, Ibn ul-ʿAmīd, Saheb Ibn ʿAbbād, Abū Bakr Khwārzami, Abul Qāsim Harīrī and Qāzī Fādhīl became the big names as writers with distinctive style although a greater portion of their rhymed and cadenced compositions reflect artificiality as well as lack of vigour and effectiveness. Compared to these writers, Al-Ghazālī, Ibn al-Jawzī, Ibn Shaddād, Sheikh Muhī ud-dīn ibn ʿArabī, Abū Hayyān Tawhīdī, Ibn Qayyim and Ibn Khaldūn have a greater claim to our esteem as knights of the plume for their smoothness and facility of arguments, masterly handling of the subjects, attractive style of expression and portrayal of tender susceptibilities and affections. But, unfortunately, their only fault was that they chose to write on religion or some other serious subject instead of applying themselves to the works written merely to please the ear or to display their command over language.

It is interesting to see a writer often taking the pen in hand for producing works of two kinds, one displaying rhetorical ingenuities and flowers of eloquence and the other a model of simple and direct prose; the former is deemed admirable by his contemporaries and the writer himself considers it to be his lofty and ennobling attainment; but the latter work is highly esteemed by the subsequent generations which consign the former to the shelves of the libraries and grace the others with a lasting fame. The book Ibn al-Jawzī was so proud of that he named it *Al-Modahish* or 'Wondrous Strange' is unheard of today but his miscellanea of personal experiences and events written in a plain and simple language and totally devoid of rhetorical adornment, to which he perhaps attached little importance, is now prized in the literary circles.

If we go through the history of Persian literature, we would

find Zahūrī, Abul Fadhal and Ni'āmat Khān 'Ālī dominating the style of Persian prose. However, if a natural and unaffected expression of emotions and narration of plain, plump facts were to be regarded as the yard-stick for perfect model of prose writing, then very little of their writings, marred as they are by florid and verbose style, rhetorical artifices and verbal conceits, would stand the test of standard prose. As against these, there would be numerous other works always ignored by the critics and historians of Persian literature which would measure up to the criterion of a perfect model of prose writing. We would find that the greater part of the letters written by Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn Yahyā Manerī, Mujadid Alf Thānī, Sheikh Ahmad Farūqi and Aurangzeb 'Alamgīr and parts of Izālatul Khifā' of Shāh Walī ullah and Tuhfa' Athna 'Ashriyah of Shāh 'Abdul Azīz as unrivalled in the style and structure of sentences. But it seems that in almost every language certain limits have been set which circumscribe literary writings and discourage the search of masterpieces written in a different style and diction on other serious subjects. And, the result has been that for centuries innumerable jewels of elegance and grace have been lying beneath the dust unknown, unnoticed.

Literary critics more often overlook the fact that effectiveness of a writing, whether prose or poetry, which imparts it an enduring fame, is the outcome of an inmost craving of its writer to express the truth known or felt by him. A softhearted friend of humanity gifted with the loftiness of tone and stateliness of language, and moved by an earnest longing to convey a heartfelt reality, infuses a touch of tenderness and feeling to his writing that makes a dent in every heart. Such a writing preserves its uniqueness without end.

Literary critics have ever discussed the rules and patterns of eloquence and the writings of a poetical or literary cast as well as the styles and attributes that bear a correlation with fluency and gracefulness but seldom have they recognised that it is really the sincerity and alutrism of a speaker or a writer which transmits vigour, freshness and sharpened sensibilities

to his compositions. If someone with a greater sense of realism and with an eye on the charm, effectiveness and cachet of the literary works were to attempt their re-classification, he would perhaps find them falling into two categories: one would be those expressions of inmost feelings and heartfelt realities which are written neither for worldly gain nor to display the command of language; the works falling in the other category would be those written to please one's ears or to find favour with the potentates which, unfortunately, makes their composers more of flatterers and artful courtiers than accomplished poets and litterateurs. He would find a world of difference between the two. One being an earnest craving of heart penetrates the heart of the readers and retains its fervidness and appeal for a long time to come. And if the writer happens to be a seeker after truth, fathoming the mysteries of mind and heart to establish the validity of real and eternal values of life, he leaves a deep and lasting impression on the heart of his readers. On the other hand, the writings of the other type, although receiving momentary applause of the readers for their flowers of eloquence and rhetoric ingenuities never make a durable impact upon their readers. The former follows a style simple and direct, concise and convincing while the latter is marred by florid and verbose style lacking pathos and feeling. The difference between the two has been succinctly brought out by someone in a parable. A hound was asked: "Why can't you catch up with the deer in your chase." "Because," replied the dog, "he runs for his life and I for my master."

Much in literature that is beautiful and sublime in thought and artistic in construction consists of the songs of the beauty of star-filled sky in the night, twinkling smile of the streams, the colours of the dawn and dusk and the gentleness of the morning breeze because these have ever elevated and inspired the imaginative feelings of man by providing inner composure, peace of mind and harmony of spirit. But the elevation of spirit attained through mystical experience and the state of ecstasy produced by absorption in the Absolute Being delivers oneself from

dependence on external stimuli required to awaken the fancy or imagination of the poet. Their hymn-tunes and love songs spring from the inner contentment of heart and swift flight of the spirit to the sublime heights of love-divine. Khwāja Mir Dard, a famous Urdu poet, has alluded to the same reality in this verse :

Why go to tavern, O Dard, for the ruddy cup ;
With my heart intoxicated, I feel pretty puffed up.

So, this was the state of composure, penetrating consciousness, spiritual illumination and altruistic urge for the moral upliftment of others coupled with a command of language and refined aesthetic sense which made Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn a literary genius. He created an altogether new style, lucid and delightful, for the expression of his heartfelt realities and diffusion of virtues in his readers. In their vigour and effectiveness his letters are thus unmatched not only in Persian prose alone but in the entire Islamic literature.

Makhdūm's Letters and their Addresses

The most celebrated among the collection of Makhdūm's letters is the one published under the title of *Maktūbāt Hazrat Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn Yahyā Manerī*, which is also known as *Maktūbāt Sadī* or *Seh Sadī Maktūbāt*. This collection contains one hundred letters addressed to Qāzī Shams ud-dīn of Chausa which were compiled by the chief disciple of Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī, Sheikh Zain Badr ᶜArabī. In his introduction to this collection Sheikh Zain Badr ᶜArabī writes :

"Qāzī Shams ud-dīn of Chausa, a disciple of the Sheikh, made repeated requests in his letters to him that since he had to stay at a place far away from him and was precluded from attending his discourses, something to guide him on his journey of spirit might be committed into writing. The Qāzī implored Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī so earnestly that his petition ultimately met the approval of the Sheikh who started writing about the various stages and states undergone by the seekers after truth in their quest of the perfection of divine knowledge. It was

thus that numerous profound yet inscrutable details relating to spiritual contrition and effulgence, Unity of Godhead and knowledge of divine attributes, essence and dynamism of love, stages of attraction and endeavour, separation and isolation, blessings and blemish, preceptorship and discipleship along with the accounts of earlier precursors of the path of purity were put into writing. These letters were sent on different occasions during the year 747 A.H. from Bihar to the town of Chausa. Several attendants and inmates of the monastery kept copies of these letters and compiled them for the benefit of the seekers of spiritual purification."

Another slim volume of the letters of Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī was also published under the title of *Maktūbāt-i-Jawābī* which was later incorporated in the *Maktūbāt-i-Seh Sadī* brought out from Lahore. This collection contains the letters, not published earlier, which were written in reply to the petitions submitted by Sheikh Muzaffar to solve the difficulties experienced by the travellers of the path of mysticism. These letters give us a glimpse of the higher reaches of intellectual and spiritual attainments of Sheikh Muzaffar who had made a will that these letters should be buried with him after his death. Fortunately, some of his disciples, who happened to read them got their copies made out. This collection contains 28 letters of Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī.

There is yet a third collection of Makhdūm's letters containing 153 of them written to different persons between Jamada al Ūlā and Ramadhān of the year 769 A.H.

Subject Matter of the letters

Anybody who goes through these letters would not fail to realise that the splendid details and essence of realities not perceptible to the outward eye, expounded by Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī, are neither the fruits of his incisive intelligence nor could these be had by deep study or cultivation of knowledge, but could only be experienced by a heart in its loftiest stage of spiritual exaltation.

What Makhdūm says about the sublime majesty and excellence of Divine Being, His might and omnipotence, His beauty and perfection, the feelings of awe, hope and ardent love taking root in the heart of true believers and gnostics, the need for alternate states of effulgence and contrition experienced by the travellers of the mystic path and repentence on one's sin which opens the floodgates of Divine compassion point out that the writer, soaring in higher domains of spirituality, is familiar with the inner content of abstruse realities.

The exalted position occupied by man among the sentient beings, his lofty aspirations, his desire to achieve the impossible, his determination and firmness of mind, the grandeur and beauty of his heart and the unfathomable essence and nature of love described in a graceful and vigorous language by Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī deserves to be given a place in the finest production of human mind in all lands and ages.

Similarly, the unethical forms of natural propensities of human mind, his own self-deceptions and the ruses of Satan, transgressions that often take the shape and colour of vices and hinderances obstructing the path of the devotees expounded by Makhdūm speak of his keen observation and deep knowledge of practical ethics.

However, in order to fully appreciate the faults and dangers besetting the path of mystics and the warnings sounded by Makhdūm to avoid these pitfalls, his exhortation to follow the injunctions of the *Sharī'ah* and the comprehensive treatment of the exalted position of prophethood *vis-a-vis* the state of saintship it would be necessary to understand the religious thought and different *sufī* systems of the time when these letters were written. Here we would be giving a few excerpts from the letters of Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī dealing with some of the more important gnostic problems to acquaint the readers with the style and tenor of these letters.

VII

GOD

The Absolute Being

Describing the absolute will and authority of the Supreme Being, Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī refers to Quranic declaration: He will not be questioned as to That which He doeth,'[1] whereas man being accountable for every action of his 'they will be questioned.'[2] Everything belongs to God, explained Makhdūm, for there is nothing to which man can lay a claim. He may bestow whatever favours he desires on a man and debase whom He desires. He says that none can question the authority of God because whatever exists in the world 'is the bounty of Allah; which He giveth unto whom He will.'[3]

In a letter[4] he writes:

"Who has a right to raise the question why has God bestowed wealth and riches on one and not on others. We see a king appointing a man as his minister and another as his attendant or usher. Similarly, God favours one with wealth of faith, picks out a man from the path of vice or draws up a fellow out of the tyrants and wrongdoers, humble and the low. But who has the nerve to demand: 'Are these they whom Allah favoureth among

1. Q. XXI: 23
2. *Ibid*
3. Q. LXII: 4
4. Letter No. 3

us?"[1] He ordains to admit in his presence Fuzail ibn ʿAyādh, a dreaded bandit, and directs Balʿam Baʿur[2] who sat on his prayer-mat for four hundred years to be turned out. He elevates ʿUmar, the idol-worshipper, and debases ʿAzāzīl, the adorer engaged in divine service for seven thousand years. Verily, 'He will not be questioned to that which He doeth.'[3]

"If He casts a benevolent glance on us, our errors shall turn into goodness, our imperfections into soundness and our ugliness into comeliness. O brother, a handful of earth was lying insignificant, trodden beneath the feet, but no sooner had He pity on it, an announcement was made with the flourish of trumpets: 'Lo! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth.' "[4]

In another letter[5] he explains how lordly, imperious and unconcerned God is:

"Hark, O brother, and take a lesson. Pay attention to the distress of Adam, the lamentation of Noah, the pangs of Abraham and the wailing of Jacob. Behold Joseph being pushed into the well, Zachariah being sawed into two and John being put to sword. Recall to your mind the deep anguish and excruciating grief of Muhammad, on whom be peace and blessings, and recite the verse: "Everything will perish save His countenance."[6]

As for the sublime majesty of God, Makhdūm writes in another letter:

"My brother, see the light, for we can never gain access to His majestic court with these counterfeit coins. How can the

1. Q. VI: 53
2. Balʿam of Cannanite race whose story is related in the Bible (Num. 22-24). The story does not find a place either in the Qurʾān or the Traditions but was adopted by the early exegetists. Balʿam thus achieved a proverbial fame as a learned Israelite who was beguiled by the Satān.
3. Q. XXI: 23
4. Q. II: 30
5. Letter No. 36
6. Q. XXVIII: 88

fodder of a hawk be digested by the sparrow? How can the robe of honour meant for one great and exalted, fit in on our low-statured bodies?"[1]

But, as Makhdūm says, the magnificence and majesty of God inspires not only awe, wonder and reverence but also gives hope to the insignificant and down-trodden people; for, the generosity and kindness of God takes no time in raising the mean and ignoble to the highest pinnacle of fame and honour. To quote his words:

"This is the wealth to which nobody can prefer his claim: it can be had only through the benevolence of God. Were it to be claimed as a matter of right, then, I swear to God, you and I would never have got anything. But, His favour not being contingent on our entitlement, the profane and defiled can hope for His benevolence as much as the pious and pure of heart can do or even more than them. No wonder! He can make the throne of kings out of the heap of rubbish where dogs loiter. But God has, in His wisdom, appointed certain causes for every contingent. If you want to achieve something noble and great, you shall have to push forward daringly with the *Sharīʿah* as your guide and Truth as your means, for your trait is profane and rebellious."[2]

The same point was elaborated by Makhdum in this letter.

"The benevolence of God depending entirely on His sweet-will, confers favour on one while His justice punishes another. He retrieved ʿUmar from the idol-temple to bless him but He left ʿAbdullāh ibn Ubai to be accursed within the mosque. A poet has spoken the very truth in this way:

Thou destroyeth one but knoweth how to renovate,
Whom thou redeemeth, Thou knoweth also to lay waste

"My brother, we have to do with an Absolute and All-powerful God. He is capable of turning the heaven into hell and the hel

1. Letter No. 41
2. Letter No. 50

into heaven; making a pantheon of the Kaʿaba and turning the Kaʿaba into a temple of idol-worshippers. Nothing makes any difference to Him. Who is it that is not stunned and stupefied by His awe-inspiring power? Therefore, be always awe-struck and terrified lest His chastisement appears as a bolt from the blue. His benignity is as independent of causation as his harshness. If He sometimes calls for a blasphemous sinner to wash off his sins and holds off a devoted and pious believer to let him taste the pangs of separation, He does it to let everybody know that His benevolence and severity both admit of no restraints at all. He occasionally causes a wicked tyrant to take care of a prophet and sometimes sets a prophet to look after an unworthy malefactor. He often makes a dog sit with the saints, and a saint to go to the dogs, but whosoever is approved by Him is never rejected and whosoever incurs His displeasure is doomed for ever."[1]

The unlimited authority of God is thus described in a letter by him.

"Always pin your faith in the beneficence and absolute authority of God. If He so wills, a thousand temples and churches would turn into Kaʿaba and Bait-ul-Muqaddas[2] and innumerable sinners and wrongdoers into pious believers and friends of God. No cause or force intervenes between His will and the effect desired by Him. He can cause tens of thousands of disbelievers to embrace Islam and turn polytheists into monotheists. He requires no time to convert the accursed mischief-makers into sanctified souls glorifying His name. But nobody has the heart to ask how does it all come to pass."[3]

In yet another letter he propounds the omnipotence of God in these words:

"He does what He likes: He never cares who is ruined or saved. A man dies of thirst in a wilderness and says: 'How

1. Letter No. 59
2. The Dome of Rock in Jerusalem
3. Letter No. 72

many streams gush out to overflow but I am dying of thirst!'[1] He immediately gets a reply from on High: 'We bring a thousand devotees to a dreadful forest and kill them all with the sword of Our will so that some of Our vultures and beasts may feast on their carrion. If anybody gives tongue to demand: 'Why for?' He makes him tongue-tacked with the reply: 'He will not be questioned as to that which He doeth.'[2] The devotees are Ours, and so are the beasts and the birds. Why should one question in Our affairs?"[2]

In a letter Makhdūm tells the addressee that nobody knows what the wheel of fortune has in store for him. He might be saved or doomed as the possibilities of both exist evenly.

"My brother, your destination is long, long away, the path is unsafe, the object of your affection unattainable, your body is weak while your own heart, weakened and wasted, is excited by a passionate desire for the Beloved. A poet has said:

No other prize Thou seeketh, save the life of lover,
That's why few make bold to be Thy wooer.

"There are innumerable hearts thrilled and intoxicated by His love but their life-long endeavours, at the last moment, present the picture of what the Qur'ān depicts thus—'And We shall turn unto the work they did and make it scattered motes.'[3] And, in the hour of death, how many hearts apparently wrapped up in His love find from their Lord, 'that wherewith they never reckoned.'[4] How many faces turn in their graves from the side of *Qibla*[5], how many adorers are branded unamicable on the day they first meet the Truelove; but many are there who are reassured with the words: 'Sleep thou as a bride.' But, just the opposite, many are forewarned with the intimation 'Sleep thou as an ill-starred wretched.' And they are thus rejected never to

1. Q. XXI: 23
2. Letter No. 56
3. Q. XXV: 23
4. Q. XXXIX: 47
5. The Ka'aba

be redeemed,—

One not fitted to consort with God,
Vicious then becomes his virtuous act!

"But there are also those whose every sin is pardoned.
The Redeemer effaces all evils from their hearts to bless,
Whom He makes undefiled by faults, pure and blameless.

"Behold, O brother, Khalīl[1] coming out of the pantheon and recite: 'He bringeth forth the living from the dead;'[2] spot Cana'ān[3] deserting Noah and recall to your mind: 'He bringeth forth the dead from the Living.'[4] He raised Adam to the sublime heights from which he did not come down despite his transgression but He pulled down Iblīs[5] to those depths which rendered all his litanies and prayers valueless. 'There are glad tidings'[6] for some while others are threatened with the foreboding: 'On that Day there will be no glad tidings for the guilty.'[7] He gives hope to some with the words: 'The mark of them is on their foreheads from the traces of prostration'[8] and drives others to despair with the threat: 'The guilty will be known by their marks.'[9] A poet has truly said:

Don't be forgetful of your self like an ignorant dolt,
Earn some merit here before you give up the ghost.[10]

Makhdūm explains that God is both Severe as well as Forgiver, Unlimited and Unrestrained, just as the Divine Attributes are in their operation; both of these take effect

1. Abraham, the friend of God
2. Q. X: 31
3. Son of the Prophet Noah
4. Q. VI: 95
5. Satan
6. Q. XXXIX: 17
7. Q. XXV: 22
8. Q. XLVIII: 29
9. Q. LV: 41
10. Letter No. 77

simultaneously and independently with the result that a believer has ever to remain in a state of suspense between fear and fortitude, hope and despair. Referring to the Quranic verse "Doer of what He will",[1] Makhdūm throws light on the majestic might and absolute authority of God in these words:

"His benevolence often summons up a man to partake His grace; at times He turns the earth beneath the paws of a dog into collyrium for the eyes of the pious and the pure hearted. Sometimes He bestows an immortal fame on a dog by saying thus: 'their dog stretching out his paws on the threshold'[2]; at times His wrath warns us that this is the place where the teacher of angels worshipping Him for seven hundred thousand years was made accursed in the twinkling of an eye; He calls for the idol-worshipper 'Umar to make him a bosom friend; not seldom He turns away a Bal'am Ba'ur endowed with Divine knowledge, from the temple and then 'his likeness is as the likeness of a dog, if thou attackest him he panteth with his tongue out and if thou leavest him he panteth with his tongue out.'[3] At times He receives one with the most distinguished marks of honour, deputes a thousand angels of light to receive His guest and bestows on His friend treasures unbounded, but oftentimes He turns back the beggar empty handed; sometimes one is made to grace the Heaven of heavens, but often He allows not one to remain standing at His threshold. Knowledge and reason are dumbfounded here and saints and devotees are things of naught; here is the sally of 'Doer of what He will,'[4] and the effulgence of the Supreme Power. He does whatever He wills and decides whatever He desires."[5]

Grace and Mercy of God

Makhdūm describes the might and lordly command of God

1. Q. LXXXV: 16
2. Q. XVIII: 18
3. Q. VII: 176
4. Q. LXXXV: 16
5. Letter No. 78

so vividly that it makes one's blood run cold. But, following in the footsteps of the prophets of God who come not merely to threaten but also to comfort and console lest the mankind gets frightened and loses its heart, he gives words to portray the tenderness and mercy of the Creator with the same vigour and effectiveness. If Makhdūm tells his disciples, on the one hand, how immeasurably and eternally exalted God is, in the totality of His omnipotent and omnipresent attributes, acknowledging no rule, standard, or limit, save His own sole and absolute will, to whom belongs the domain, and the excellency, and the power and the might; he also explains to them, on the other, the mercy, and the bounty, and the all compassing munificence of the Creator and Sustainer Who declares "My mercy embraceth all things,"[1] and consoles the afflicted with the revelation: "O My slaves who have been prodigal to their own heart! Despair not of the mercy of Allah, Who forgiveth all sins. Lo! He is the Forgiving, the Merciful."[2]

In a letter Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī thus defines the Divine attribute of mercy:

"O my brother, when the encircling wave of Allah's mercy surges forth it washes away all the sins and vices of His slaves. Then all their failings turn into goodness for the vileness and baseness of man are transient while the mercy of God is enduring, eternal. How can a thing fleeting and unenduring hold its own against that which is infinite and everlasting. Verily, the sole cheerful expectation of man, a speck of mortal dust, lies in the compassion of God. What else is there, besides the benevolence of God, to produce a glimmer of hope in man sunk in vice and corruption? How many demoralised and debased a soul is there whose face has been blackened by the infirmity of his own base desires and predilections, but the harbinger of Divine mercy suddenly appears to announce that the Eternal Dispenser conveys His greetings and desires to

1. Q. VII: 156
2. Q. XXXIX: 53

converse with thee."[1]

Invitation to All

Makhdūm held out hope to those whom he addressed his epistles, encouraged them to reform themselves and partake in the Divine bounty as if it were a repast for all and sundry, a free and public pothouse where everyone could go and slake his thirst. He told them that there was absolutely no question of anybody being turned back, denied and dejected, for the Eternal Beloved Himself removes the veil from the heart of a seeker after truth and draws him near. Had it not been so, argues Makhdūm. then how a created and contingent being, ignorant and transgressing, could approach that perfection of Beauty free from every limitation and blemish for 'Naught is as His likeness.'[2]

Here is a letter in which Makhdūm describes the unbounded bounty of God in words of lasting beauty.

"The doors of His generosity are wide open. It is a banquet for one and all. Hurry up, come and get it! Brother, how much of His bounty can a man take in, whereas His unlimited bounty allows neither the master nor the slave, neither the rich nor the poor to remain deprived. The glorious lamp of the Heaven rises everyday, but the entire human race cannot grab a particle of its rays. Still, it lights up the palaces of kings and grandees as it shines upon the sheds and cribs of the beggars. Never mind about man, the conglomeration of water and dust, but have your eyes fixed on the loving grace of God who says: 'He loveth him who loves Him,'[3] 'Allah is the Protecting Friend of those who love Him'[4] and He promises to reward His servants thus: 'Your endeavour (upon earth) has found acceptance.'[5] This is a distinction not enjoyed even by

1. Letter No. 56
2. Q. XLII: 12
3. Q. V: 54
4. Q. II: 257
5. Q. LXXVI: 21

the angels. The heavenly hosts are nearer to God, impeccable, celestial and holy and are ever engaged in the glorification of God but the blushing honour bestowed on man is something quite different."

Divine Mercy

Makhdūm invites attention towards the benignity, graciousness and clemency of God which is ever at the look out to do the highest possible good to the offenders. He says that no matter how grievous one's sins may be, a sincere repentance and complete turning away from the sin would let him pass without any resentment, blame or punishment. He cites the example of those irredeemable sinners who were pardoned by divine favour in a trice, their sinfulness was changed into virtuousness and they became the fount whence honour springs. Makhdūm reminds that howsoever numerous one's besetting sins, faults and failings may be, the grace and mercy of God is limitless and embraces all things, great and small.

In a letter he shows the ways of Divine mercy.

"Howsoever sunk in corruption you might be, my brother, repent on your sins and become eligible for the grace of God. You are not steeped in iniquity more than the wizards of Pharaoh nor are you filthier than the dog of the companions of the cave; neither have you a heart more stony than the rocks of Mount Sīnāī[1] nor are you more worthless than the Hunnānah.[2] A niggar is brought from Abyssinia to be sold as a slave, but who can object if his master calls him Kāfūr.[3]

1. Mount Sina (Sinai) on which God gave Tablets of Law to Prophet Moses.
2. The log supporting the thatched roof of the Prophets' mosque The Prophet used to lean on it while delivering the Friday sermons. After the pulpit was erected in the mosque and the Prophet began delivering sermons therefrom, the log was heard making a cracking sound as if wailing in separation.
3. *Lit.* Camphor, meaning white. One, Kāfūr Akhshīdī, Abyssinian by race, was the ruler of Egypt. The famous Arab poet, Mutannabi, was his poet-laureate.

When the angels said to the Lord, 'We do not have strength to vie with this man made of clay in spreading corruption on earth'; the Lord replied, 'Reject him, if We send him to your threshold; don't purchase if We ever sell him to you. Do you fear that his corruption would exceed Our mercy or that his iniquity shall stain Our perfection? This is the lump of clay whom We have exalted and blessed with Our grace. What have We to lose by his vileness."[1]

Repentance

The sorrow for one's sins with self-condemnation implies a change in conduct and helps in the upward ascent of spirit. The essential conditions for such a repentance have been explained in a letter by Makhdūm quoted here.

"The *baʿit* entails repentance over one's sins expressed by the disciple before his spiritual guide. In the language of mystics this is called *gardish* or detour which signifies a change in the position of the person doing penance, for it takes him from pollution to purity, from profanity to sanctity; if turns the pantheon of his heart into a mosque; elevates him from a brute to a human being; transforms him from worthless dust to gold; takes him from darkness to light; and then, the glorious lamp of faith illuminates his heart and Islam or surrender to God guides him on the path of Divine gnosis."[2]

1. Letter No. 2
2. Letter No. 29

VIII

Dignity of Man

A considerable part of the letters of Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī, exhibiting a masterly blend of vigour and flexibility, poetic emotion and matter-of-fact description, re-state the truth of human dignity, the richness and sublimity of human heart and the swift flight of spirit to its source attained through dynamic love of man for the Ultimate Truth.

The poetic creations of Hakīm Sanāī[2], Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn ʿAttār and Maulānā Jalāl ud-dīn Rūmī have, undoubtedly, sung of the nobility of man, but, in Persian prose, the letters of Makhdūm occupy a singular pre-eminence by virtue of their style, the manner of presentation and vivifying elements of confidence and trust in the worth and dignity of man. They sound a new note, inspire man with expectation and courage and open new vistas of vision to the lofty heights attainable by human spirit. These racy and sparkling essays contradict the pessimistic view in regard to humanity unfortunately propagated by most of the then mystics through their misguided interpretation of *fanā* or annihilation of the self. To these mystics the life of man was a vale of tears, another name of vain expectations from which one ought to seek refuge through total affacement of the self itself, which was lying and crafty, deceitful and fiendish. The self of man had thus come to be regarded as the greatest stumbling block in the way of man's spiritual development. Such a pessimistic view of humanity had shaken the faith

of man in himself who, ashamed of his own existence, had begun to look upon the celestial beings as the shining examples or models of spiritual ascent. He had forgotten that it was Adam, the progenitor of man, and not an angel, before whom these heavenly creations had been made to bow down low.

It was to contradict these ill-conceived notions, to dispel this surrounding gloom, that Makhdūm Yahyā Maneri gave his clarion call to re-affirm man's nobility and eminence, his deputyship of God and the love and confidence reposed in him by the Lord and Creator of the universe. Makhdūm repeatedly emphasised this point in his letters, in different ways and on different occasions, to restore confidence and hope in human destiny which incites man to construct new dreams and to aim for higher achievements.

Man, the Favourite of God

In a letter writes Makhdūm :

"The creations of God are many and varied, but none finds favour in the eyes of God like this clod of dust blended with water. When God willed to create man out of clay, whom He desired to crown with his vicegerency, the angels said : 'Wilt Thou place therein one who will do harm therein and will shed blood ?'[1] The reply received by the angels was meant to convey that ardent love needs no advice for love and precaution never get together. The reply, given by God dropped the hint : Of what use is your prayer and glorification, if not acceptable to Us ? What is the harm done by the sins if Our grace wipes out the slate clean ? We have already ordained : 'Allah will change their evil deeds to good deeds.'[2] 'Surely', said God to the angels, 'you betake the right path while they can go astray but whenever We shall desire Our mercy shall unfold the path of virtue for them and blot out the signs of transgression from their faces ! You very well know that We are the object of their

1. Q. II : 30
2. Q. XXV : 70

passionate yearning, but what you do not know is that We also love them!

"A poet has correctly said:

Dear to One's heart, when commits a mistake,
A thousand commendations his virtues make."[1]

Trustees of Divine Love

"Other sentient beings," says Makhdūm in another letter, "have hardly anything to do with love-divine, for they do not possess an aspiration so high and noble (as you do). You see the celestial beings treading always the same beaten track because the message of love is not meant for them. But, if man has a hard road to travel it is because he plunges into love. Thus, whosoever happens to have a taste of love, he ought to bid good-bye to his own self for love does not put up with anything save itself.

O love, thou hast made a drunkard of me,
Secure I was, rolling in the lap of luxury.

"When the star of Adam's good fortune rose high, the entire universe was all a flutter; some complained that their prayers of countless years have been overlooked and a clod of earth exalted over them. Then, came the reply: "Never mind the clay he is made of, cast your eyes upon the essence of love infused in him: for, 'He loveth who love Him.' "[2] This is our command and his heart is glowing with the fervour of love."[3]

In yet another letter Makhdūm unfolds the romance of man's glory in this manner.

"God created eighteen thousand worlds but each one of them remained indifferent to the yearning of love, nor did anyone of them ever try to get even a fraction of it; wherefore man alone could lay a claim to this wealth. All the other creations remained unblest with this glory. And that is why someone has

1. 36th letter
2. Q. V: 54
3. 46th letter

said:

Thou art highest of the high and lowest of the low;
Not a creation is there on even terms with Thee."[1]

Purpose of Creation

The distinction accorded to man, explains Makhdūm, is because he is the purport and aim of the creation of entire universe. For man is the centre of all creations, the tender affection of love and devotion reflects his worthiness.

"This clod of earth is not less distinguished. nor is Adam and his progeny less dignified, my brother. The Empyrean and the Throne, the Tablet and the Pen, the heaven and the earth were all created for his sake. As Sheikh Abū ᶜAlī has said God nominated Adam as his deputy,[2] chose Abraham for His friend,[3] selected Moses for Himself[4] and announced the glad tidings of 'He loveth who love Him,[5] to the believers. Verily, the heart of man would have been listless and man himself like the rest of mute creation if this spiritual affinity had not been an indwelling attribute of his nature."[6]

Responsibility of Faith

The nobility and greatness of man and the distinction enjoyed by him is because he agreed to assume the Divine Trust. The heavens and the earth and the hills shrank from bearing the Divine Trust but man, ignorant and transgressor, agreed to shoulder the burden although he was feeble and weak. He was foolish enough to think that being no more than a speck of dust, he had nothing to lose if he was unable to prove equal to the Trust reposed in him. To what lower depth could he be scaled down if he failed, so he thought. Endowed with courage and

1. 59th letter
2. Q. II: 30
3. Q. IV: 125
4. Q. XX: 41
5. Q. V: 54
6. XX: 41

self-respect he is still exclaiming: "Is there any more to come."[1]

Makhdūm throws light on the exalted position enjoyed by man over all other beings and creations in a letter in his forceful and impressive style "Glorified is this lump of earth and high are his aspirations although humble and miserable he is in his composition. When the offer of Divine Trust was thundered forth, the celestial beings engaged in glorification of God for seven hundred thousand years and raising the slogan—'We hymn Thy praise and sanctify Thee'[2]—'refused to bear that burden.'[3] The sky prided in its lofty height; the earth pleaded that dust was its garment; the mountain made the plea that it stood as a watchman, firm and stable; the jewels expressed the fear of losing their lustre and brilliance; but, the ignorant speck of dust stretched forth its hands submissively and took the Divine Trust to its heart. It feared not anything like the heavens and earth, for, what had the lowest of the low to lose in taking that risk. Anything debased and degraded, so it thought, is thrown in the dust, but how the dust can be put to shame? It stepped ahead undaunted and undertook the burden unbearable to the seven heavens and earth and yelled with delight: 'Is there any more to come?'"[4]

Glory of the Dust

Now listen to what Makhdūm says about the glory of man.

"Never belittle the clod of dust and the drop of water that maketh a man, for whatever is there in the world comes out of the two; whatever you see here proceeds from earth and water; and whatever you find here besides these is a figment of your imagination. As they say, the love took wings from its home

1. Q. L: 30
2. Q. II: 30
3. Q. XXXIII: 72
4. 49th letter

of honour, saw the empyrean, sublime and exalted, and passed by it; crossed the Throne, splendid and magnificent; forded the sky, elevated and towering; then it came down to the earth which was plunged in toil and trouble and descended to make its nest there."[1]

A gnostic poet has made an immortal verse of the same idea in these words:

Heaven or earth, what can suffice Thy vastness?
My heart alone can accommodate Thy goodly precious.

In one of his letters Makhdūm spells out the distinctive place occupied by man in the eyes of his Creater.

"O brother, man has been specially favoured by the Lord. It is related that when the Angel of Death is deputed to carry off the soul of any believer, he is instructed first to convey the greetings of God and then take his soul away. You would have read in the Qur'ān that 'the word from a Merciful Lord (for them) is Peace'[2] on the Day of Reckoning. In truth, there is no deity except Allah, the Everliving, and so is His word and His greeting. Had not the condescending favour of God been conferred on man on the day he was created, he would not have been accosted with salutation at his first meeting."[3]

Man, the Confidant of Divine Secrets

But, why has man been allowed to occupy the most distinguished place of honour? The reply given by Makhdūm to this question is:

"Of all the beings inhabiting eighteen thousand worlds created by God, none was bestowed an ambition higher than that of man; no other being was told: 'I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My spirit;'[4] no apostle was raised

1. 50th letter
2. Q. XXXVI: 58
3. 51st letter
4. Q. XXXVIII: 72

from amongst any other creature; nor a book conferred on one; nor yet God sent His salutation on any one of them. It was man alone whose ardent love made the pangs of separation unbearable for him and that is why his heart was allowed to subsist by the Essence of Divine Beauty in this world and permitted to behold Him in the next. Man has nothing dearer to his heart than the love of God in this world and no other longing than to witness His radiant countenance unveiled in the world to come. This is the lesson man has learnt from the Quranic verse: 'The eye turned not aside nor yet was overbold.'[1]"[2]

Man, Superior to Angels

"It was assuredly much too precious," writes Makhdūm, "that made the angels prostrate before man—the creature envied by the heavens. Howsoever ignoble and earth-born a man may appear to be, he is so holy and consecrated in his essential nature that neither the celestial intelligence nor human reason is capable of plumbing his secrets. When the lustre of his true being radiates, the angels are bewildered and the heavens dumfounded. He is modest and meek yet others are terror-smitten with his awe.

If thy essence, the angels were to behold;
Prostrating would they arrive at Thy threshold."[3]

The Cognizant Heart

Makhdūm maintains that the value, excellence and superiority of man springs from his heart which is the abode of invaluable wealth bestowed on him. In a letter he wrote of the human heart:

"The Lord created the empyrean and committed it to the care of heavenly hosts; fashioned the paradise and appointed

1. Q. LIII: 17
2. 53rd letter
3. 58th letter

Rizwān[1] to guard it; made the hell and deputed Mālik[2] to keep watch over it; but when He chiselled the heart of the believer, He came out with the announcement: 'his heart is between the two fingers of the Most Merciful."[3]

Here is another letter written by Makhdūm Yahyā Maneri throwing light on the worth of this admirable gift of God. "Had there been anything more worthy and precious than the heart of man, then God would have assuredly laid the jewel of His gnosis in that. A Tradition of the Prophet speaking of God's will says: 'Neither My heavens can contain Me nor My earth; but if anywhere there is room for Me, it is the heart of a believer.' Heavens are unable to store up the perfection of Divine knowledge and the earth is incapable of bearing its burden. Thus, the heart of the believer can alone bear this heavy charge. A stud could carry a man like Rustam but when the sun of Divine Radiance shines over a mountain, than which there is nothing more massive and solidly pitched in the earth, 'it comes crashing down'[4] below. But this very sun of eternal Beauty shines day in and day out on the heart of the believer who raps out the cry: "Is there any more to come'[5] and greedily seeks still more of it, to quench his unquenchable thirst."[6]

The Broken-Hearted

Whatever is broken into pieces becomes valueless, but a disconsolate and broken heart is the only exception; for, it becomes more precious in the eyes of its Creator. Makhdūm expounds this truth in these words:

"Ah brother, breakage renders everything worthless but a heart becomes more valuable if it is more melancholy and broken. Moses once whispered: 'Where should I seek Thee.'

1 Name of the angel guarding the Paradise
2 Angel guarding the Hell
3 43rd letter
4. Q. VII: 143
5. Q. L: 30
6. Q. 38th letter

'With those,' came the reply, 'whose hearts are rent for my sake.' "[1]

Realm of Love

The most precious wealth a heart possesses is love—a love that encompasses all the spheres and states and whose authority extends over this world as much as over the next. Makhdūm vividly describes how love signifies the highest reach of mankind.

"Love enwraps the entire duration of time, the past, present and future. It encircles the first and the last, whence and whither. A gnostic has said that this world as well as the world beyond are for preferring a demand. If some one asserts that the other world is not meant for demanding he is absolutely wrong. Certainly there would not be fasting and prayer in the world to come but one would beseach God for things still higher and nobler. On the Day of Judgement the Law will be abrogated, no doubt, but, the two things—Love for God and Praise of God—shall ever remain."[2]

1. 6th letter
2. 46th letter

IX

Intuitive Insight

The letters of Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn Yahyā Manerī shed light on some of the most intricate problems and highest manifestations of intuitive religious perception experienced by highly evolved and elevated, sensitive and self-conscious souls. The gnostic imagery and mystical truths vividly described at different places and in different contexts in these letters bear an eloquent testimony to the higher plane of consciousness attained by Makhdūm through prayer and penance and his researches into the inner content of religious experience as also his endeavour to combine speculative reason with the intuitive experience. These indescribable truths given forms of expression by Makhdūm so enchant and evoke rapturous joy as a few poetical compositions or elegantly written tracts can claim to produce.

Unity of Manifestation

The writings of Makhdūm contain certain concepts and doctrines which are generally believed to have been articulated a few centuries after him. One such mystical doctrine known as Unity of Manifestation (*Wahdat-us-Shahūd*), was propagated in the eleventh century of the Islamic era by Mujaddid Alf Thānī to contradict the then prevalent concept of Unity of Being (*Wahdatul Wajūd*) It is true that Mujaddid Alf Thānī was *par excellence* the greatest exponent of the doctrine of the Unity of Manifestation but one is surprised to see that Makhdūm Yahyā

Manerī, too, had clearly delineated the fundamental position of this concept about two and a half centuries before it was revived by the Mujaddid Makhdūm has explicitly stated in his letters, in the light of his personal religious experiences and intuitive knowledge, that what was commonly known by Unity of Being or annihilation of every created being in the Divine Essence was really no more than a state of eclipse of other beings and objects in the presence of Divine light exactly in the same way as the dim light of the stars is deprived of its brilliance before the luminuous lamp of the sun. He succinctly describes the process by pointing out that the extinction of any object is altogether different from its becoming invisible. He explains that the tenuity and evasiveness of the immanentist feeling deludes many an elevated soul in the ecstatic state of Divine effulgence unless grace of God and guidance of an illuminated teacher give shoulder to lead him on the right path.

"The effulgence of Divine Essence is so manifested before the traveller of spirit that its radiance blots out every other object and being from his view. The tiny particles of dust are put out of sight in the light of the sun but it does not mean that these particles become extinct or get absorbed in the sun. What it actually means is that these minute atoms cover up their faces in shame before the luminuous lamp of heaven. Man never becomes God for God is Exalted, Glorious and Great. Nor is ever a created being swallowed up, incorporated or united with the Divine Essence. Becoming extinct is quite different from being invisible. A gnostic poet has lent articulation to this truth in these words.

For the Eternal One nothing is old or new;
All others are insignificant, He is that He is.

"When you look into a mirror, you get absorbed in the reflection of your own self and forget the mirror : then you do not aver that the mirror has become extinct or that it has turned into your reflection or that your reflection has melted into mirror. This is the substance of annihilation in Divine Oneness which manifests itself in a like manner

He talks funny who speaks of it, but does not know
To set a limit between one's annihilation and His refulgent glow.

"This is the tenuous path where many have slipped. No traveller of spirit can forge ahead unless the grace of God and the guidance of an elevated mentor, who had himself waded through the billows' rage of this furrowed sea, help him to find out his way."[1]

Transformation of Attributes Alone

Here it might be contended that a lamp brought before the sun loses its lustre so completely that its existence becomes merely illusory; for, nothing can be existent and nonexistent both at one and the same time. Makhdūm says that such a contention is not correct because the transformation undergone by the lamp is of attribute and not of essence. He writes in a letter:

"Some say that when the sun shines the lamp practically loses its entity: the sun is then the only reality that exists. What is the use of a lamp, they say, which melts into nought, for its entity and light rest on an even keel. If anybody contends that the existence and non-existence are each other's antithesis and the two cannot be found at one and the same time, then he ought to know that we are talking about the attributes and not about the essence. The essence does not undergo a change but the attribute does. The sun shines over a stream and warms its water. Its quality is changed but not its nature; the rays of sun act on the attribute and not on the essence. There is no contradiction at all in it."[2]

Upward Ascent of Spirit

The spiritual ascent of those who have attained the pinnacle remains, quite often, hidden from their companions and friends.

1. 1st letter
2. 86th letter

The prophets of God and such of the illuminated souls who have reached the stage of Acquaintance, are gifted with courage, endurance and a soaring ambition. They neither whirl nor shout, nor yet they work miracles or lay a claim to it. They always try to conceal their attainments from the public gaze.

Makhdūm writes in a letter that the higher is this upward progress of spirit, the less it is noticed by the people around the mystic.

"The faster the speed, the more its movement becomes imperceptible. Don't you see that when the stone of the wind-mill gains speed, it appears that the mill is not working. Somebody asked Junaid Baghdādī: 'Why don't you stir during the musical recitations?' In reply he recited the verse from the Qur'ān: 'And (O Man), thou shalt see the mountains, which thou thinkest are fixed firmly, shall float (in the air) even as clouds.'[1] You cannot see swift speed. When it goes ahead at full speed, it cannot be seen. Often the zephyr moves so gently that nobody notices its speed."[2]

Control of Carnal Desires

The development of character and spirit, according to some, depends on complete extinction of carnal desires. This, says Makhdūm, is not correct. He holds that the aim should not be to stamp out the desires of flesh but to put bridle on them. Ghazālī too has explained, in *Ihyā'-ul-Uloom*, that the reformation of a man does not require complete suppression of vices like anger, malice etc. but in subduing these natural propensities and holding them in leash. Makhdūm's treatment of the subject is inspiring and creates a profound impression on the readers. He writes in a letter:

"He is an ignoramus and dotard who considers that the *Sharī'ah* demands smothering of the carnal appetites and natural instincts of man. He has not given thought to what the Prophet

1. Q. XXVII: 88
2. 4th letter

said : 'I am a man and sometimes I get angry.' Sometimes his indignation became apparent on his face. That is why God loves those who 'control their wrath'[1] and not those who do not possess that emotion at all. How can the *Sharī'ah* demand extinction of sexual desire when the Prophet contracted nine marriages. If some one has lost his sex-urge, he ought to take medical treatment so that this natural instinct is restored. For the loving care of one's family members and children, anger over the enemies of God in fighting against them and preservation and propagation of one's race spring from the natural instincts man possesses, even the apostles of God have shown eagerness for these. Thy longed to have their line of progeny unbroken. The *Sharī'ah* only demands that these instincts should be kept under strict command of the Law. A hunter needs a steed and a well-trained dog which go after the chase on his bidding. The horse, if untrained, will throw away the rider and the wild dog will pounce at him. It is thus essential that the horse and the dog should he well-trained for hunting. So are the instincts of sex and anger needed for capturing the rewards of Hereafter. But, your aids should be under your control ; for if they gain a control over you, your ruin is inevitable. That is why prayer and penance seek to bring these under one's command."[2]

The Idol of Miracles

It has been stated elsewhere that the working of miracles by the saints had become so popular during the time of Makhdūm that it had come to be regarded as an indisputable evidence of one's piety and sainthood. However, Makhdūm maintained that indulgence of certain mystics in preternatural acts constituted a veil and signified their interest in objects other than those leading to Divine propinquity. It was also an idol, in his view, which required to be rejected and given up

1. Q. III : 134
2. Q. 40th letter

altogether, if need be, for the health of soul.

"The working of miracles," writes Makhdūm in letter, "is nothing short of idolatry. The unbelievers worshipping idols deny the overlordship of God but no sooner do they give them up and make a public announcement of their rejection of idols, they turn into His friends. So is the miraculous power wielded by a gnostic : his journey of spirit gets beclouded and suspended if he is satisfied with wonder working ; but, if he gives it up he is elevated and rewarded with nearness. As a gnostic poet has said :

Their gaze fixed on the heaven, the pious are ;
Smacking their lips in the lock-up, the lovers are.
His mercy is for all, noble and laity, good and bad,
Bold and intrepid one has to be, to bear his wrath.

"This is the reason why when God bestows miraculous powers on an elevated soul, he becomes more God-fearing and humble. He becomes unpretentious, meek and yielding and inculcates a greater awe of God."

Ill-disposed Miraculous Powers

"It is possible," says Makhdūm, "that the secret truths revealed to certain God-moved souls through Divine grace or penetrating intellect or prognostication of coming events may be denied to some men of God, but that does not signify any defect in the eminence of spiritual attainment of the latter group. Defect or fault lies in deviation from the right path. The secrets revealed to the blessed ones increase their faith, strengthen their virtues and morals and lead them to glorification of the Lord. But if such preternatural powers are enjoyed by a man who transgresses the injunctions of the *Sharīʿah*, then, in very truth, they become the means of leading him afar from the path of virtue. He is then deluded and befooled for he begins to regard others as his inferiors and underlings. At times he even forsakes Islam and starts denying the limits set by

1. 8th letter

God for the permissible and prohibited, lawful and unlawful. He begins to consider recollection of God as the only way of His glorification and discards the way of the Prophet, and this ultimately leads him to infidelity and apostasy."[1]

Social Service

Explaining the merits of social service Makhdūm writes in a letter :

"Rendering social service is highly meritorious for the seeker after truth, for, it helps to inculcate those virtues which cannot be produced by any other form of litany and prayer. It deadens the love of self, expels pride and vanity, produces modesty and humbleness, beautifies the morals, teaches one to follow the path of the Prophet and that of the blessed mystics, elevates the spirit and illuminates his ego from within and without. These are the ennobling gifts of service. Once a seer was asked : 'How many ways are there to attain fellowship of God ?.' 'As many as the atoms this world contains,' replied he, 'but none more straight and easier than consoling the broken-hearted. I have attained God through this way and I bid my followers to do the same.' There are others, too, whose devotions to God attain a higher virtue because of their selfless service to their fellow beings."[2]

Criterian for Self-purification

The criterion for self-purification prescribed by the mystics is sufficiently high. In fact, it is so high that one can never be sure whether all vestiges of self-conceit, earthly desires and sex-appetite have been completely eradicated from one's self. One can never confidently claim to have reached that stage of self-purification where one's spiritual ascent takes wing unfettered by his base desires. However, in Makhdūm's view, a man reaches the desired stage of self-purification when he gives up

1. 96th letter
2. 71st letter

acting according to his own predilections and wishes and begins to pursue, in all seriousness, the path chalked out by the *Shar*ʿ*ah*. In the letter quoted here Makhdūm sets forth the essential requisites for self-purification.

"My brother, the Self of man is deceitful and treacherous, It always boasts and brags and makes false claims. It always advertises that it has put a bridle on its cravings and appetites, but it ought to be asked to furnish the proof of its claim. And the only evidence sufficing to establish its claim is that it does not take a step of its own but acts according to the injunctions of the Law. It is truthful, if it acts zestfully on injunctions of the *Shar*ʿ*ah*, but if it avails of the leave or interprets the Law to suit its longings, it is assuredly a blasted slave of its desires. If it is a helot of anger, it is a dog in the garb of man; if it is a serf of its appetite, it is a beast; if it is a captive of its despicable desires, it is a greedy hog; if it is enthralled by style and taste, it is effeminate. But the man who adorns his Self with the compliance of the *Shar*ʿ*ah*, puts it to test from time to time, gives the reins of his desires in the hands of the Law and moulds himself in its cast, then alone can he claim to have gained control over his Self, its propensities and inclinations. To that end only prudent and sagacious men, enlightened with the core of truth, bridle their Self with the chains of righteousness and fear of God."[1]

1. 96th letter

X

Defence of Faith

It was undoubtedly a great achievement of Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn Yahyā Manerī that he guided a large number of people on the path of God, purified and animated their spirits, created a longing in their hearts for attaining the knowledge of Divine Being, lit the flame of love-Divine in them and expounded the intricate and subtle realities of intuitive experience in an elegant, moving and heart-warming diction like other great reformers and renovators of the faith. But this was not all. He protected the purity of faith as the earlier revivalists and defenders had done, against the antinomian tendencies and pantheistic monism imported by misguided *sūfī* cults which eluded every effort to tie them down by the classifications and definitions of the *Sharī'ah*. He also endeavoured to eradicate the influence of Batinite and philosophical concepts imbibed and propagated through neo-Platonist pursuits of religious experience. In a country, like India, where the people did not have a direct access to the Divine revelation and the Traditions of the Prophet, the rapidly growing popularity of the heterodox belief and practices had sharpened the conflict between them and the sound and puritanical faith of Islam. Makhdūm's letters refuted, in a peculiarly vivid and direct way, this incredible confusion, multiplicity, and often absurdity of ideas. He fell back on the Scripture and the *Sunnah* and rejected all intellectual constructions and intuitive subtleties which came in

conflict with the authorised interpretation of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. He also balanced and corrected the intuitive imagination and mystical experience of his time by accommodating these in the framework of fundamental religious attitudes. This was made possible solely because of his own spiritual insight gained through personal ecstatic experiences and illuminations which made him not only an exponent of mysticism but also an authority on the subject whose interpretations and experiences could not be brushed aside by other mystics.

Prophethood and Sainthood

An erratic concept prevalent for quite a long time among the then mystics was that sainthood occupies a place more exalted and sublime than prophethood: the saints being always attracted to Divine perfection severed all relationship with the world and sentient beings around them while the prophets' mission being to propagate and expound the revealed truth, the latter had, very often, to remain in contact with their fellow beings. And, since, the fellowship of God was a task more consecrated than the fellowship of human beings, the saints held a more elevated and hollowed place than the prophets did. Some other mystics, however, made a distinction between the two states of the prophets when they were absorbed in Divine propinquity and when they were busy disseminating the divine message among their fellow beings, and thereby concluded that the prophets in their former occupation enjoyed a higher position than when they performed the function of their ministry. Even this view signified an inferior position of the prophethood and its mission by assigning a more exalted status to the engrossment in Divine Being, the chief pursuit of the saints.

Thus, however interpreted, this blasphemous proposition was derogatory to prophethood and involved impairment of that exalted office besides paving the way to agnostic and irreligious way of thinking. With characteristic vividness and vigour of his writings and discourses, Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī

set in to give the lie to the nonconformist belief of the mystics and established, through his clear and logical reasoning, that the prophethood, in all its states and stages, was infinitely higher than sainthood. He demonstrated that the shortest span of prophetic existence, a single breath of any prophet, was decidedly more blessed and sacred than a whole life-time spent in the state of saintliness. The arguments brought forth by Makhdūm to clinch his point were drawn more from the higher reaches of his ecstatic illuminations than cold and logical formulations of discursive reason.

Makhdūm writes in reply to a letter wherein Shams ud-dīn had sought a clarification in regard to the position of prophethood.

"Shams ud-dīn, my dear brother, you ought to know that there is a consensus of opinion among all the mystics treading the path of spirituality that the saints, in all states and stations, are subordinate to the prophets who are always superior to the saints. What is incumbent on the saints to translate into action is the guidance vouchsafed by the apostles of God. All the prophets are saints, but no saint can claim the honour of being a prophet. There is not the least difference of opinion in this regard among the doctors of divinity bearing allegiance to the way of *Ahl-i-Sunnat Wal-Jamāᶜat*. A sect among the renegades, however, claims that the saints surpass the prophets on the ground that the latter are ever engrossed in effulgence of the Transcendent Being while the prophets are busy ever and anon in the pursuit of their mission of preaching the message of God to the human beings. Thus, they argue that a man who is totally effaced and lost in beholding the Beauty of the Lord takes precedence over one who seldom engages his mind in contemplating the presence of God. Another group which venerates the saints and claims to be their followers goes even further to assert that the saints are higher-up than the prophets for the reason that former are initiated into the divine mysteries whereas the latter have access only to the knowledge revealed to them. They infer from it that the saints are acquainted with

the secrets not known to the prophets. They avouch that the saints have intuitive knowledge not possessed by the prophets. They draw this inference from the story of Moses and Khidhr and assert that Khidhr was a saint and Moses a prophet, who got revelations from the Lord. The latter was unable to fathom the secret of any mysterious event unless a revelation descended from on High. But, Khidhr the saint, endowed with intuitive knowledge could immediately plumb the secret of every mystery in as much as Moses had to submit himself as a disciple of Khidhr. This, they say, clearly proves their point, for, a disciple is always an underling of the mentor.....But one should never lose sight of the fact that all the precursors of righteous path of religion, on whom reliance can be placed, have vehemently protested against such sacrilegious creeds and ideas. They have never accepted this profane doctrine that any saint can ever excel or even be a match to a prophet of God. As for the story of Moses and Khidhr, the latter was granted a momentary primacy by virtue of his intuitive knowledge on a particular occasion while Moses enjoyed an enduring paramountcy and, as you know, abiding supremacy cannot be overshadowed by a passing pre-eminence. Take Mary, for instance, who was granted a temporary ascendancy over other women because of the birth of her child without being touched by a man, but this temporary advantage could not eclipse the perdurable superiority of ʿAyesha and Fātima and their illimitable supremacy over all women for all times to come. Hark ye! my brother, the entire life spent in litanies and prayers, transports and illuminations by all the saints of all times shall come short of a step taken by a prophet. What the saints endeavour to achieve through penance and devotion, flight of spirit and diving into the treasure of Divine mysteries; that knowledge is attained by the prophets straightaway. They are charged with the responsibilities of their apostolic ministry after being illuminated by the lamp of sanctity and that is the reason why they are able to awaken the zeal for fellowship of God in thousands of their followers.

"Hence, a breath of the prophets outweighs the entire life of saints. The saints are able to cast off their humanly veil and speak of the secrets of spiritual existence only after attaining the highest degree of sanctity but they still remain under the shadow of the weaknesses human flesh is heir to; but the prophets, on the other hand, find the secrets of nature unveiled before them on the very first step of their ministry. The last lap of the saints is the starting point of the prophets or, to be truthful, even the destination of saints cannot compare with the outstart of the prophets. Once someone asked Khwāja Bāyezid al-Bistāmī: 'What do you say about the life of the prophets'. 'Heaven forbid!', he replied 'we can never gain entrance in their realm.' The way the stations and stages of sainthood remain hidden from the eyes of uninitiated masses, the exalted reaches of prophethood are beyond the imaginative flight of the saints. Prophets take to strides while saints stroll: one rides the skies while the other creeps on the earth.

"In clarity and purity of spirit, virtue and sanctity the entire bodily frame of the prophets is like the head and heart of the saints, intoxicated with the love of God. There is thus a great difference between the men who have found entrance to the place which, for others, is the goal of their heart's yearning.[1]"

Paramountcy of Sharī'ah

Another indecorous thinking that had gained popularity among certain mystics of the day was that the established religious institution could be brushed aside by them, for, according to them, one needs to follow the commandments of the *Sharī'ah* up to a certain stage; but when he reaches the stage of Acquaintance and attains the fellowship of Divine Essence, he could reject the demand for external conformity to the *Sharī'ah*. The wide diffusion of this erratic idea had given reins to many illiterate and misguided mystics who, acting as

1. 20th letter

impious ministers of evil, were spreading infidelity and irreligiousness among the superstitious masses. Even certain educated persons had started citing the Quranic verse: 'And worship thy Lord until there cometh unto thee the death.'[1] to support this contention. They argued that the *Sharī'ah* need be followed in letter and spirit until one attains the stage of certitude of the transcendental Truth, but once one reaches that stage the chains of Law fall to pieces for him. Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī raised his voice in defence of the authentic religious view and demonstrated the fallacy of the antinomian practitioners of sufism. He set forth arguments to show that whatever stage or station may be attained by a traveller of spirit, he has to follow the rules of the *Sharī'ah* to the end of his life's journey, for they are never suspended or superseded by the elevation of spirit.

The following quotation from one of his letters will show that Makhdūm severely taxed those who opposed the authority of the established religious institution finding expression in the laws of the *Sharī'ah*.

"Brother Shams ud-dīn ought to be aware of the subtle ways of the Devil who sometimes makes the mystics believe that the object of renouncing sin is to weaken the natural human desires and inclinations so that the remembrance of God overcomes them and cleanses the heart of its impurities. The whole of this endeavour is meant, the Devil tells them, to attain the perfection of Divine Knowledge, and so is also the *Sharī'ah* a means to arrive at the same goal. Thus, if a man already reaches that destination, what has he to do with the luggage and means of transport. The prescribed forms of liturgical service would then become a veil for him. One already beholding Eternal Beauty needs no prostrations, devotions and orisons as these are the aids for attuning the strings of one's

1. Q. XV : 99—Almost all the eminent commentators of the Qur'ān hold the view that the word *Yaqīn*, in the Arabic text, means death in this verse while certain mystics interpreted the word to mean spiritual enlightenment.

heart with the melody of Divine Essence. They claim that they find themselves engulfed by celestial glory and the reign of spirit—But, in truth and reality, they give expression to what Satan had felt when he was asked to prostrate before Adam. Being aware of his station he thought that nothing would he gain by bending low before a being lower than him. God has not referred to this story in the Qur'ān as a myth or fable but to serve as a warning for those who are given to the ruses of Satan. God wanted to tell them that nobody should dare flout His Law. Verily, the precursors of faith have correctly emphasised that the path chalked out by the *Sharī'ah* is the only way to attain the fellowship of God.

"Here Satan has kept an important point concealed from the view of this misguided group. He has persuaded them to believe that the only purpose of the *Sharī'ah* is to attain proximity of the Lord. But this is wrong for the *Sharī'ah* is meant for a lot more than that. Take for instance, the prayers prescribed for five times a day; these are like five poles supporting a canopy of human perfection; if the poles are taken away, the canopy will fall to the ground as Iblīs[1] himself fell from his exalted position. Now, if you want to know how the prayers lend their support to make a man virtuous; my brother, this is something beyond your limited intellect to conceive. These are like the properties or characteristic qualities of medicines or other substances, or the attracting power of the magnet but nobody can find out the reason why these properties have been embedded in these substances."

Practical Wisdom of the Sharī'ah

The practical wisdom of the *Sharī'ah,* utility of its practical functioning and the way it guards and enhances the faith and moral virtues of the believer and links his spirit to the Divine Essence has been set out by Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī in one of his letters. He shows through an allegory how disregard for

1. The name of Satan

the rules of the *Shari'ah* leads a man to the destruction wrought by the devil within him.

"Suppose a man constructed a palatial house on the top of a hill and provided every means of comfort within it. When the time came to quit this world, he bade his son to make whatever alterations he might desire in the house, but to leave untouched an aromatic grass planted by him in a portion of the courtyard even if the grass became dry. When spring came, the hill and vales wore the look of emerald green, flowers of numerous varieties blossomed forth and filled the air with their fragrance and the sweet smell of the old grass was overcome by redolent smells. The boy thought that his father had planted that old spicy grass merely for fragrance and therefore it was of no use to let it be there any more. He, therefore, ordered his servants to pick out the grass. But when the grass was thrown away, a black serpent came out of a hole and bit the boy. The aromatic grass planted by his father had two properties, first, to keep the house filled with its aroma, and, secondly, to keep away the snakes. It had an antipathic smell to the reptiles. The boy was so proud of his knowledge that he considered everything not known to him to be nonexistent. Being ignorant of the Divine revelation that 'of knowledge ye have been vouchsafed but little,'[1] the poor fellow was brought to ruin. Similar is the case with those misinformed mystics who think that the wisdom and secrets of the *Shari'ah* laid open to them are all that is worth knowing about it. This is a great mistake they have made like many other travellers of spirit who have fallen a prey to this fatal belief. They had thought that the *Shari'ah* had only one objective and thus they could never think of its other aims and designs which were more important for attaining the best ends. They could never conceive that if the *Shari'ah* intended to achieve only the end they had in view, then why did the Prophet spend his nights standing in prayer until his feet used to swell up. The Prophet never said that

1. Q. XVII: 85

the prayer was incumbent on his followers but he was exempt from it."[1]

In another letter on the subject Makhdūm says:

"All those doctors of divinity, *sūfis* and saints who had attained the height of sanctity have held the view that every rule and condition laid down by the Islamic doctrine of duties is imperceptibly related to some spiritual merit beneficial for Divine blessing in the Hereafter. All of them have scrupulously followed the discipline of these laws till the end of their life. Once an attendant of Sheikh Junaid Baghdādī, who was helping him in performing ablution, forgot to pass his fingers through his beard. The Sheikh caught hold of his hand and reminded him to do so for it was a *Sunnah* of the Prophet. Some persons present on the occasion asked: "Is it not permissible to omit these voluntary details especially when one is unable to perform the ablution by himself?" The Sheikh replied: "I have been blessed by God solely because of acting on the *Sunnah* of the Prophet." This was the way trodden by those who had been blessed with interior illumination; but, alas, those who are misinformed are so easily thrown off the false scent. They think that whatever is beyond their understanding or not known to them, does not exist at all. *Fajr* has two *rak'ats* of prayer, *zuhr* has four, *'asr* has again four, *maghrib* has three and *'ishā'* has four of them, and then each *rak'at* is completed by a genuflexion and two prostrations. Each of these has its own merit propitious for attaining the entelechy of spirit. The worth and excellence of all these acts are manifested as soon as a man breathes his last. Then he knows that no perfection, no exaltation of spirit is of any use to him if the stipulations of the *Shari'ah* are taken out of them. Every wayfarer of mysticism who will leave this world in that condition would find himself utterly ruined and then he would cry out: 'What has happened to the perfection of spirit attained by me?' Then the reply he would get will be: 'The plank of your perfection was not nailed to your

1. 70th letter

coffin and so it has been blown away in the same way as all the merits and perfections of Iblīs were reduced to dust for a single transgression of the Divine command."[1]

Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī was so rigidly opposed to the *sūfis'* disregard of religious duties that in a letter he lashes out at their practice in these words: "This is absolutely wrong and the creed of renegades who say that one (mysticism) is permissible without the other (Law of Islam). They assert that when some one attains the Truth and is rewarded with illuminations and beatifications, the Law becomes superfluous for him. Fie upon such beliefs and creeds."[2]

Significance of the Sharī'ah

Makhdūm held that the path of mysticism was a misnomer without acting on the precepts of the *Sharī'ah*. Says he:

"Nobody can get anything out of mysticism if he does not obey the precepts of the *Sharī'ah*. It is only the renegades and apostates who hold that one is permissible without the other. They maintain that the *Sharī'ah* becomes needless after one has found the essence of Truth. Damn this belief! *Sharī'ah* is the outward expression of faith, but without inward credence it is hypocricy; and the belief without external imperative is apostasy. The exterior of the *Sharī'ah* without interior faith is a defect: the faith concealed in the heart without outward expression is no more than avarice. That which is manifest is so integrated with its inner content that the two can never be separated."[3]

Emulation of the Prophet

In his letters Makhdūm Yahyā Manerī always expounded the view that neither salvation could be achieved nor any perfection of spirit, or, for that matter, nor the fellowship of Eternal Being can be attained without following in the footsteps of the

1. 26th letter
2. *Ibid*
3. *Ibid*

beloved Prophet of God. Commenting upon the Quranic verse: 'Say, (O Muhammad to mankind): If ye Love Allah, follow me, Allah will love you.'[1] Makhdūm gave expression to his inmost feelings and the ardent love for the Apostle of God in these verses of a gnostic poet:

Seek not a new path, his word is gospel,
Seal your lips and stop all prattle.
Whatever says he, saith the Lord,
Whate'er he does, is an act of God.
Be dust unto him to wear the crown,
To have your way, first knuckle down.
Like the dust of his way, if not is he,
He'll lick the dust, even if an angel be he."[2]

1. Q. III: 31
2. 50th letter

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Chronological Table

A.H.	A.D.	Events and Personalities
93	712	Muhammad ibn Qāsim Taqaffī captured Sind
136-158	753-774	Reign of Caliph Mansūr
198-218	813-833	Reign of Caliph Al-Mamūn
208	824	Saiyida Nafīsa (d.)
339	950	Abu Nasr Al-Fārābī (d.)
409/411	1017/1020	Khwāja Abū Muhammad Chishtī (d.)
416	1025	Sultān Mahmūd attacked Somnāth
421	1030	Sultān Muhmūd of Ghazni (d.)
428	1037	Abū ʿAlī Sīnā (d.)
538	1143	Muhammad Jārullāh Zamakhsharī (d.)
563	1168	Khwāja Ziāʾ ud-dīn Abul Najīb ʿAbdul Qādir Firdausī
569	1173	Birth of Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī
571-588	1175-1192	Reign of Prithvirāj Chauhān
571-602	1175-1205	Expeditions of Shahāb ud-dīn Muhammad Gorī against India
584	1188	Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn meets Khwāja Qutub ud-dīn
586-87	1190-91	Shahāb ud-dīn Muhammad Ghorī defeated by Prithvirāj
588	1192	Prithvirāj defeated by Muhammad Ghorī
595	1198	Ibn Rushd (d.)
602	1206	Shahāb ud-dīn Muhammad Ghorī (d.)

A.H.	A.D.	Events and personalities
606	1209	Mongol's attack on India repulsed
10th Jamada ul-Ūlā	27th September 1213	Khwāja Najm ud-dīn Kubrā (d.)
610		
627	1230	Khwāja Moʿīn ud-dīn Chishtī (d.)
632	1235	Ibn Al-Fāriz (d.)
633	1236	Khwāja Qutb ud-dīn Bakhtiyār Kāki (d.)
636	1239	Birth of Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn Auliya
638	1240	Muhī ud-dīn Ibn ʿArabī (d.)
647	1249	Al-Malik al-Sālah Ayyūb (d.)
647	1249	ʿIzz ud-dīn Aibeck ascends the throne
650	1252	Hasan ibn Muhammad As-Saghānī (d.)
652	1254	Abul Barkāt Majd ud-dīn ibn Taimiyah (d.)
655	1257	Nūr ud-dīn ʿAli ascends the throne
657	1259	Saif ud-dīn Katz deposes Nūr ud-dīn ʿAlī
658	1260	Saif ud-dīn Katz slain
658	1260	Rukn ud-dīn Baibers ascends the throne
661	1263	Birth of Sheikh Sharaf ud-dīn Yahyā Manerī
10th Rabi-ul-Awwal, 661	22nd January 1263	Birth of Ibn Taimiyah
5th Muharram 664	17th October, 1265	Khwāja Farīd ud-dīn (d.)
672	1273	Nasīr ud-dīn Tūsī (d.)
677	1278	Saiyid Qutb ud-dīn Madnī (d.)
678-689	1279-1290	Reign of Al-Malik al-Nāsir Qalawoon
682	1283	Shahāb ud-dīn ʿAbdul Halīm Ibn Taimiyah (d.)
683	1284	Ibn Taimiyah's first speech

A.H.	A.D.	Events and personalities
684	1285	Sheikh Kamāl ud-dīn Zāhid (d.)
690	1291	Sheikh Yahyā Manerī, father of Makhdūm ul-Mulk (d.)
691	1292	Sheikh Najīb ud-dīn Firdausī (d.)
692	1293	Ibn Taimiyah goes for *Haj*
694	1295	Conversion of Ghazān to Islām
696	1297	Mongol hordes Invade India
697	1298	Land Reforms by Hosam ud-dīn Lājeen
698	1299	Tumult kicked up against Ibn Taimiyah
699	1300	Egyptian forces come to aid of Damascus
27th Rabi-ul-Awwal 699	24th December, 1299	Battle between al-Malik al-Nāsir Muhammad ibn Qalawoon and Gazān
3rd Rabi-ul-Thani, 699	28th December, 1299	Damascus emissaries meet Ghazān
699	1299	Ibn Taimiyah joins Aqoosh Al-Afram in his expedition against heretics
700	1300	Taqī ud-dīn Ibn Daqīq ul-ʿId meets Ibn Taimiyah
2nd Ramadhān, 702	20th April, 1303	Second battle of Sultān al-Malik al-Nāsir with Tartars
704	1305	Al-Mujāhid Ibrāhim ibn Qattān produced before Ibn Taimiyah
Zil Hijja, 704	July, 1305	Second expedition against heretical sects
2nd Muharram, 705	25th July, 1305	Third expedition against heretical sects
9th Jamada-ul Ūlā 705	27th November, 1305	Complaint lodged by Rafaʿīyahs against Ibn Taimiyah

A.H.	A.D.	Events and personalities
5th Ramadhān, 705	21st March, 1306	Ibn Taimiyah summoned to Egypt
22nd Ramadhān, 705	7th April, 1306	Ibn Taimiyah reached Egypt
30th Ramadhan, 706	3rd April, 1307	Ibn Taimiyah offered to be released from jail
14th Safar, 707	15th August, 1307	Qāzī Badr ud-dīn Jamāʿah meets Ibn Taimiyah in jail
23rd Rabi ul-Awwal, 707	22nd September, 1307	Amīr Hosam ud-dīn Mohanna ibn 'Isā' takes out Ibn Taimiyah from jail
Safar, 709	July, 1309	Ibn Taimiyah's internment in Alexandria
13th Shaʿabān, 709	16th January, 1310	Nasīr ibn Qalawoon captured Damascus
7th Zil Qaʿadā, 709	8th April, 1310	Baibers Al-Jashanghir executed
4th Rajab, 711	16th November, 1311	Ibn Taimiyah manhandled by riff-raffs
712	1312	Royal edicts issued on the advice of Ibn Taimiyah
Shawwl, 712	February, 1313	Reports of Tartar invasion
5th Rabi-ul-Awwal, 718	7th May, 1318	Ibn Taimiyah forbidden to give juristic opinion on divorce

A.H.	A.D.	Events and personalities
10th Muharram, 721	9th February, 1321	Ibn Taimiyah released from preventive detention
721	1321	Qutub Ud-dīn Mubārak Shāh killed by Khusrū Khān
721-24	1321-24	Construction of Makhdūm's monastery
721-26	1321-26	Ibn Taimiyah devotes his time to teaching
20th Zilhijja, 724	8th December, 1324	Warrants of vicegerency signed by Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn
725	1325	Sultān Muhammad Tughlaq ascends the throne
18th Rabi ul-Ākhir, 725	3rd April, 1325	Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn (d.)
7th Shaʿabān, 726	9th July, 1326	Ibn Taimiyah placed under detention
9th Jamada-ul-Akhra, 728	21st April, 1328	Writing material taken away from Ibn Taimiyah
22nd Zil-Qaʿada, 728	28th September, 1328	Ibn Taimiyah (d.)
734	1333	Ibn Saiyid-in-Nās (d.)
752	1351	Sultān Mohammad Tughlaq (d.)
759-776	1358-1375	Sultān Muhammad Shāh Bahmanī
767	1366	Sultān Muhammad Shāh Bahmanī entered Daulatabad
780	1378	Saiyid ʿAlī Hamadānī's arrival in Kashmir

A.H.	A.D.	Events and personalities
6th Shawwāl, 782	10th June, 1380	Sheikh Saraf ud-dīn Yahyā Manerī (d.)
786	1384	Amīr Syed ʿAlī Hamadanī (d.)
786	1384	Maulānā Farīd ud-dīn ʿĀlam (d.)
791	1389	Qāzī ʿAbdul Muqtadir Kindī (d.)
801	1399	Sheikh Zain ud-dīn (d.)
808	1406	Ibn Khaldūn (d.)
809	1406	Maulānā Khwājgī of Delhi (d.)
820	1417	Sheikh Ahmad of Thānesar (d.)
825	1422	Saiyid Muhammad Gesū Darāz (d.)
849	1445	Sheikh Shahāb ud-dīn bin ʿUmar (d.)
874	1469	Muhammad ibn Qutb (d.)
986	1578	Muhammad Tāhir Patni (d.)
1003	1595	Sheikh Yaqūb Sharafī (d.)
1034	1624	Sheikh Ahmad Srahindī (d.)
1047	1637	Maulānā Jamāl ul-Aulia Chishti (d.)
1052	1642	Sheikh ʿAbdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi (d.)
1085	1673	Shāh Pīr Muhammad of Lucknow (d.)
1161	1747	Mulla Nizām ud-dīn (d.)

Glossary of the Arabic and Persian Terms

Ahl-i-Sunnat Wal Jamaʿat—A term generally applied to a sect of Muslims who acknowledge, in addition to the Qurʾān, the *Sunnah* or path of the Prophet to be the correct version of Islam. The *Sunnīs* i. e. one of the path, embrace by far the greater portion of the Islamic world. They believe the first four Caliphs to have been rightful successors of the Prophet and belong to one of the four schools of jurisprudence founded by Imām Abū Hanifa, Imām ash-Shafeʿī, Imām Mālik or Imām Ahmad ibn Hanbal. *See* Sunnīs.

Allah-Ô-Akbar—*Lit.* 'God is great.' An ejaculation which is called *Takbīr*. It occurs frequently in the liturgical form of worship and stands for the declaration of God's absolute overlordship over the world.

Ashʿarite—A sect formed by Abul Hasan ʿAlī ibn Ismaʿīl al-Ashʿarī, born 206 A. H. (873-74 A. D.) Ashʿarites hold that the attributes of God are distinct from His essence, yet in such a way as to forbid any comparison between God and His creations. Ashʿarites traverse the main positions of the Muʿtazilites, denying that man can by his reason alone, rise to the knowledge of good and evil. They adopt the middle course between the Muʿtazilites and the Hanbalites. Unlike the former they neither accept the claim of reason to be completely free to discern metaphysical realities and deliver its verdict about the content and nature, attributes and characteristics of the Supreme Reality nor do they agree with the Hanbalites who reject the claim of reason to have any say in expounding the revealed Truth.

ʿAsr—The time for obligatory prayer offered midway when the sun has begun to decline and sunset.

Assassins—Corruption of *hashishiyah* or hasīsh-eater. A sect of the Batinites who undertook to kill treacherously their enemies.

Ayah—*Lit.* "a sign or miracle." The term is also used for one of the smaller portions of the chapter of the Qurʾān or a verse.

Baʿit—Oath of allegiance taken by the people for remaining faithful to the head of a Muslim State or any other person acknowledged as spiritual guide.

Bātinite—(or *Bāṭiniyah*). *Lit.* 'inner, esoteric.' They maintained that only a symbolic interpretation with gradual initiation by an illuminated teacher could reveal the real meaning of the Qurʾān. The word, they claimed, was like a veil, hiding the deep occult meaning never attainable to those clinging to literal explanation. Being a Shiʿaite theological school of thought, they also upheld the doctrine of the divine source of Imāmate (the spiritual leadership of an *Imām*) and of the transmission of indefeasible right of Prophets vicegerency by divinely ordained hereditary succession of Caliph ʿAlī. The widespread Ismāʿīlite sect and its offsprings like Qarmātians, Fātimides, Assassins, etc. belong to the sphere of Batinite thought.

Chishtīyah—The order of mysticism founded by Khwāja Moʿīn ud-dīn Chishtī Sajazī. It is the most popular *Sūfi* order in India.

Darul Hadīth—An institution or faculty for higher studies of the science of Traditions.

Druze—Also Daruzī. A sect founded by an emissary of the sixth Fātimide caliph, Al-Hākim l' Amr illāh.

Fajr—The time for obligatory prayer performed after dawn but before sunrise.

Fiqah—The dogmatic theology of Islam amplifying the Islamic ideals of ethical precepts in day-to-day affairs of the believers.

Fātimide—A Shiᶜaite dynasty of 13 Caliphs or *Imāms* in North Africa (911-1171) and in Egypt (969-1171). Unlike other heads of the larger or smaller States emerging within the sphere of ᶜAbbāsid Caliphate or which conceded to the Caliphs, at least to save appearance, the Fātimides challenged the ᶜAbbāsids for both the temporal and spiritual power. Beyond its political significance, however, it fulfilled the apocalyptic belief in the reign of Mahdī, as essential tenet of the Ismaᶜilite branch of Shiᶜaism.

Firdausiyah—The mystic order founded by Khwāja Badr ud-dīn of Samarkand. The order laid emphasis on contemplation, renunciation of the world, annihilation of the self and concealment of spiritual powers. The order laid particular emphasis on following the injunctions of the *Shariᶜah*.

Hadīth—*See Sunnah*.

Hāfiz—A person who has committed to his memory the entire Qurᵓān.

Haj—The pilgrimage to Mecca performed in the month of Zil-Hijja or the twelfth month of Muslim year. It is the fourth pillar of Islamic religious observances, and an incumbent religious duty founded upon express injunctions of the Qurᵓān.

Hajee—A person who has performed the *Haj* or pilgrimage to Mecca during the appointed days.

Hājib—An official appointed by the Tartar converts to Islam to settle or adjudicate upon their personal disputes according to *Yasaq*, the Mongol code.

Hakīmites—A sect of Fātimides founded by the sixth Fātimide Caliph Al-Hākim, who asserted that he was the express image of God. Al-Hākim ascended the throne at the age of eleven years in 996 A. D. and was assassinated in 1021 A. D.

Halālah—The marriage of a divorced woman with another man who must consummate the marriage and divorce her, before the re-marriage of such a woman to her first husband.

Hanafite—Those following the juristic school of Imām Abū Hanīfah an-Nuᶜmān (80-150 A. H./700-767 A. D.), the great Sunnī Imām and jurisconsult. The Hanafites, spread

over Turkey, Afghanistan and Indian sub-continent, form the great majority of the Muslims.

Hanbalites—Followers of Imām Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780-855 A. D.), founder of one of the four orthodox sects of the *Sunnīs*. The modern Wahābīs claim to follow the teaching of Ahmad ibn Hanbal. Hanbalites asserted the paramount authority of the Qur'ān with the Traditions as against superiority of reason over faith.

Haqīqat—*Lit.* 'Truth.' The essence or meaning of a thing. A stage in the mystic journey of the *sūfi* where he is supposed to receive an inspiration or illumination of the true nature of Godhead, that is to arrive at the 'Truth'.

Hisbat-ullah—*Lit.* the 'Party of Allah'.

ʿId—A common name for *Id-ul-Fitr*, the festival of fast-breaking at the end of the month of Ramadhan and *Id-ul-Adha* or the feast of sacrifice celebrated on the tenth day of Zil-Hijja.

Iftār—*Lit.* 'Breaking' of fast in the evening after sunset.

Ijmʿa—*Lit.* 'Collecting' or 'assembling'. In Islamic jurisprudence *Ijmʿa* expresses the unanimous consent or consensus of the men of learning and piety over any juristic issue.

Imām—*Lit.* 'One who leads' i. e. a normal guide or a model. It commonly denotes in the Sunnite creed the leader of the congregation in prayer who should be conversant with the ritual. The term is also applied to one learned and pious and capable of making logical deductions on a legal or theological question. In the Shiʿah doctrine, however, the term covers an entirely different notion. To them the *Imām* is the faultless and infallible leader, an offspring of ʿAlī, to whom spiritual leadership is supposed to have been passed on from the Prophet through his son-in-law and the fourth Caliph ʿAlī.

Imāmat—The office of *Imām*.

Imām Bāra—A building in which the festival of *Muharram* is celebrated by the Shiʿāhs to commemorate the martyrdom of Husain, son of Caliph ʿAlī.

ʿIshā'—The time for the last of the daily obligatory prayers, performed when the night has closed in.

Ishrāq—A voluntary prayer performed when the sun has well risen.

Ismāʿīlites—or *Ismāʿiliyah*. Also called seveners (*Sabāiyah*), they formed the group of extremist Shiʿahs originating from a schism which took place in the Shiʿah community towards the end of the eighth century about the question of the succession of the seventh *Imām* Ismaʿīl. The sixth *Imām*, Jaʿafar al-Sādiq, had disinherited Ismaʿīl in favour of his younger son Mūsā al-Kāzim but a faction of the Shiʿahs remained faithful to Ismāʿīl. Later, the Ismāʿīlites proved their vitality under such different aspects as the terrorism of Qarmātians sectaries, the caliphate of the Fātimides, the Brethren of Purity and the once so dreaded Assassins (also see Bātinites).

Jihād—*Lit.* an effort or striving. A religious war with those unbelievers who attack the Muslims or are inimical to them. It is an incumbent religious duty, established in the Qurʿān and the Traditions as a divine institution, and enjoined specially for the defence of a Muslim land and repelling evil from the Muslims.

Jizyah—The capitation tax realized from the non-Muslim subjects in lieu of protection afforded to them by a Muslim State. Such non-Muslim subjects, called *zimmis*, are exempted from military duty in defence of the realm but enjoy full citizenship rights like other Muslims, who, besides paying *zakat*, not levied on non-Muslims, are also liable to be drafted for active service.

Khilāfat Nāmah—The warrant of vicegerency conferred by a *sūfī* saint on his disciple who is thus allowed to preach and admit others in the mystical order of his mentor.

Khwārij—A sect which denied the authority of the Caliphs and believed that commission of a major sin condemned one to eternal torment in the Hell. They seceded from the armed forces of Caliph ʿAlī after the war of Siffīn in 13 A. H. as a protest against the appointment of arbitrators to decide the issue of caliphate between ʿAlī and Muʿāwiyah.

Madarsa—An educational institution, specially for

teaching of religious sciences.

Maghrib—*Lit.* west. The time for obligatory prayer offered just after the sunset.

Mamlūk—*Lit.* 'Slave', the designation of the imported Turk slaves serving in the army.

Mᶜarifat—*Mᶜarifah* or Divine gnosis is a stage in the mystic journey of spirit wherein the *sūfī*, after occupying himself with contemplation and investigations concerning the nature, attribute and works of God, attains the 'knowledge' of these.

Maulānā—*Lit.* 'a lord or master'. A term generally used for a learned man.

Muᵓazzin—One who gives the call to prayer.

Mustaufi-ul-Mamālik—The Accountant General of the realm.

Muᶜtazilites—or *Muᶜtazilah. Lit.* 'The Separatists'. A school of thought founded by Wasil ibn ᶜAtāᵓ, who separated from the school of Hasan al-Basrī. The chief tenets of the school were : (1) They rejected all eternal attributes of God saying that eternity is the proper or formal attribute of His essence; that God knows by His essence, and not by His knowledge ; that to affirm these attributes is the same thing as to make more eternals than one ; and that the Unity of God is inconsistent with such an opinion. (2) They believed the word of God (Qurᵓān) to have been created, and whatever was created was also an accident, and liable to perish. (3) They held that if any Muslim is guilty of grievous sin, and dies without repentence, he will be eternally damned. (4) They also denied the vision of God in Paradise by the corporeal eye, and rejected all comparisons or similitudes applied to God.

During the reign of the ᶜAbbāsid Caliphs al-Māmūn (813-833), al-Muᶜtasim (833-842) and al-Wāthiq (842-847) the Muᶜtazilah were in high favour.

Naqshbandiyah—The mystic order founded by Khwāja Pir Muhammad Naqshband (d. 719/1319). They usually perform *Zikr-i-Kafī* or silent devotions by way of the remembrance of God.

Nizāmiyah—The order of mysticism followed by the disciples and followers of Khwāja Nizām ud-dīn Auliā'.

Nusayrīs—Also *Nusayrī*. A sect of the Shi'ahs founded by Ibn Nusair (d. 873 A. D.), a follower and emissary of the eleventh Shi'aite Imām al-Hasan al-'Askarī. They lived in Jabl Nusairiyah and numbered about 2,50,000.

Pīr—*Lit.* 'An elder'. The term denotes a spiritual leader.

Qādiriyah—The *Qādiriyah* order of mysticism sprang up from the celebrated Saiyid Abdul Qādir Jīlānī (1058-1111) whose shrine is in Baghdād.

Qārī—One who reads the Qur'ān correctly and is acquainted with the science of pronouncing the words of the scripture faultlessly.

Qāzī—Sometimes written as Cādī. A Judge or administrator of law appointed by the ruler of a Muslim State.

Qiblah—The direction in which Muslims offer prayer.

Qiyās—The analogical reasoning of the learned with regard to the teaching of the Qur'ān, *Hadīth* and *Ijmā'*. The essential conditions for such an analogical reasoning are that (1) the precept or practice upon which it is founded should be of common and not of special application, (2) the cause of the injunction should be known and understood, (3) the decision must be based upon either the Qur'ān, the *Hadīth*, or the *Ijmā'* and (4) the decision arrived at must not be contrary to anything expressly enjoined elsewhere in the Qur'ān and the *Hadīth*.

Rāfizī—*Lit.* 'A forsaker'. Synonymous with *Rāfizah*. A term used for a body of soldiers, belonging to a sect of Shi'ahs, who joined Zaid, the son of 'Alī ibn Husain. They demanded that Zaid should abuse Abū Bakr and 'Umar, the first two Caliphs, but on his refusal to do so, they left him to the mercy of Hajjāj ibn Yūsuf. Zaid fought bravely with the handful of his remaining companions who all fell against the vastly superior enemy.

Rak'at—(Pl. *Rak'ah*). A unit of prayer consisting of one genuflection and two prostrations.

Rafāʿiyah—A mystic order founded by Saiyid Ahmad bin ʿAli bin Yahya ar-Rafāʿī al-Hasnī Abdul ʿAbbās (512-578 A H./1118-1182 A. D.) in Iraq. Author of a number of books, Saiyid Ahmad ar-Rafāʿī is reported to have one hundred eighty thousand disciples. The dominant feature of the order was emphasis on service of humanity, self effacement, gracious behaviour and severe moral and spiritual discipline. Later on, however, an extremist group of his followers took to wonder working and developed antinomian tendencies.

Sabʿīniyah—A pantheistic sect of *sūfīs* who believed that everything is God, and of the same essence.

Sadr-i-Jahanī—The officer charged with the responsibility of enforcing Islamic rules and regulations and disbursing stipends to Muslim divines, scholars and men of piety.

Sahīhain—Consists of the two books of Traditions considered to be the most correct books.

1. *Bukhārī* of Muhammad Ismaʿīl al Bukhārī (d. 256 A. H.).

2. *Muslim* of Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj (d. 261 A. H.).

Sahūr—The meal which is taken before dawn while keeping fast.

Shāfeʿītes—followers of one of the four juristic schools of orthodox Islam. The founder of this school was Imām Muhammad ibn Idrīs as Shafeʿī, who was born at Asqalon in Palestine (95/714). The Shafeʿites are found in South India and Egypt.

Sharʿīah—*Lit* 'The way'. The law, including both the teachings of the Qurʾān and the Traditions of the Prophet. It has been defined as 'the way or road in the religion of Muhammad, which God has established for the guidance of His people, both for the worship of God and for the duties of life'.

Sheikh—A title accorded to the venerable doctors of religion. It is used in addressing theological scholars and divines who have acquired a certain spiritual prominence, without necessarily holding a religious office.

Sheikh-ul-Islam—The highest ecclesiastical office under a Muslim State.

Shi'ah—*Lit.* 'Split' and also 'followers'. A general designation covering various sects of Muslims not following the conformist or orthodox faith. The schism whose origin goes back to the early years of Islam had its beginning in the rivalry for the caliphate between the Ummayyad and Alid clans after caliph 'Alī's death and Mu'āwiyah's accession to the Caliphate. The Alid party maintained that this highest office of Islam was a prerogative of the Prophet's house. They also maintained that 'Alī was the first legitimate *Imām* or successor of the Prophet and therefore rejected the first three successors of the Prophet. The belief in this regard later developed into a faith that the Prophet's God-willed spiritual and secular guidance had passed from him to 'Alī who, himself an incarnation of the Divine Spirit, had bequeathed his mission to a sequence of hereditary *Imāms* of his progeny. On this soil was set up a theological framework which left ample room for the most varied opinions, some of which hard on the borderline of Islam.

Shirk—*Lit.* Ascribing plurality to the Deity or associating partners to God. It consists of ascribing divine knowledge to others than God; ascribing divine powers to others than God; offering worship to created beings; and, the performance of ceremonies which imply reliance on others than God.

Sihāh-us-Sittah—The following are the Sihāh Sittah, or 'six correct' books of Traditions, received by Sunnī Muslims.

(1) *Al-Bukhārī*, of Muhammad Ismail al-Bukari (d. 256 A. H.).

(2) *Muslim*, of Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj (d. 261 A. H.).

(3) *Al-Tirmizi*, of Abū 'Isā Muhammad al-Tirmizī (d. 279 A. H.).

(4) *Abū Dā'ūd*, of Abū Dā'ūd as-Sajistānī (d. 275 A. H.).

(5) *An-Nisā'ī*, of Abū 'Abdur Rahmān an-Nisā'ī (d. 303 A. H.).

(6) *Ibn Mājah*, of Abū Abdullāh Muhammad Ibn Mājah (d. 273 A. H.).

Sūfī—One who professes the mystic principles for attaining the gnosis of God. The principal occupation of a *sūfī* is meditation on the Unity of God, the remembrance of God's names and the progressive advancement in spiritual life to attain propinquity of God.

Suharwardiyah—A popular order of mysticism founded by Sheikh Shahāb ud-dīn Suharwardī of Baghdad (d. 602/1205).

Sunnah—As opposed to the Qur'ān which is a direct revelation from God, the Prophet also received what is regarded as an *unread* revelation which enabled him to give authoritative declarations on religious matters. The Arabic word used for these Traditions is *Hadīth* and *Sunnah* (a saying or a custom). The Prophet gave very special instructions respecting the faithful transmission of his sayings. Gradually, however, spurious Traditions also gained currency for which an elaborate canon of subjective and historical criticism was evolved for the acceptance or rejection of the Traditions.

The *Sunnah* represents an authentic interpretation of the Qur'ān, a valuable source of law and an infallible guide for the overwhelming majority of the Muslims in every situation of their spiritual and secular life as opposed to *Bid'ah* (innovation) in religion.

Sunnī—*Lit.* 'One of the path'. A term generally applied to all Muslims who consider the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, manifested by his sayings, acts or tacit approval and transmitted by the companions of the Prophet, as the infallible guide of the faithful and an authentic interpretation of the Qur'ān.

The Sunnis embrace by far the greater portion of the Muslim world.

Tahajjud—A voluntary prayer offered after midnight.

Talāq—The sentence of divorce. The Islamic law of divorce or release from the marriage tie is founded upon express injunctions contained in the Qur'ān, as well as, the

Traditions and exhaustively treated in the works on jurisprudence.

Tarāwīh—The plural of *Tarwīh* i. e. rest. The prayers, of usually twenty *rak'ats*, recited at night during the month of Ramadhan; so called because the congregation sit down and rest after every fourth *rak'at*.

Tauhīd—A term used to express the Unity of the Godhead, which is the great fundamental basis of Islam. The teaching of the Qur'ān and the Prophet as to the nature of God, His Unity, without any associate or partner, His absolute Power and the other essential attributes of an Eternal and Almighty Being is the most important part of the Islamic faith.

Tarīqat—'A path'. The *Tariqah* or spiritual path which is usually known as *tasawwuf* or mysticism, is the inner and esoteric dimension of Islam and like the *Shari'ah* has its roots in the Qur'ān and prophetic practice. Being the actual nature of spiritual path, the traveller on the path of *Tariqat* seeks to emulate the life of the Prophet who is the prototype of spirituality and thus realises the meaning of unity or *Tauhīd* in its fullness.

'Ulama—Plural of *Aalim*. One who knows, learned; a scholar. In the plural form the word is used as the title of the learned doctors in Islamic theology and law.

'Urs—A term used for the ceremonies observed at the anniversary of the death of any celebrated saint.

Walayet—*Lit.* Sainthood or state of spiritual elevation.

Walī—(Pluarl *Auliā'*). The term is applied to a saint or holy man who has attained a high state of sanctity by virtue of his divine illumination and pious life.

Yoga—Hindu system of philosophic meditation and asceticism designed to effect the reunion of the devotee's soul with the universal spirit.

Yogi—One who practises *yoga*.

Zimmī—A member of the *Ahl-uz-Zumnah* a non-Muslim subject of a Muslim Government, belonging to the Jewish, Christian or Sabean creed, who, for the payment of poll or

capitation-tax, enjoys security of his person, property and religious observance in a Muslim country without bearing the responsibility of defending the realm.

Zuhr—The time for afternoon obligatory prayer.

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Saviours of Islamic Spirit

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VOLUME III

by

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FOREWORD

It was perhaps 1935 or 1936 when my respected brother Hakim Dr. Syed 'Abdul 'Alī, late Nāzim of Nadwatul 'Ulamā, directed me to go through the *Maktūbāt Imām Rabbāni Mujaddid Alf Thāni*. I was then not more than 23 or 24 years of age and had joined, a short while ago, as a teacher in the Dārul 'Uloom, Nadwatul 'Ulamā. I had never delved in the sufī literature nor was conversant with the terminology of mystic discipline. I had assiduously pursued history and literature of the Arabs, particularly history of Arabic literature, and was used to reading books with a fine get up and printing produced in Beirut and Egypt. My brother was fully aware of my tastes and likings for it was he who had been the chief guide during my educational attainments, but he intended perhaps to let me know what Iqbal has so trenchantly versified in this couplet :

You are but the lamp of a hearth,
Which has ever had things spiritual at heart.

Our family has been intimately connected, at least for the last three hundred years, intellectually and spiritually, with the school of thought that goes by the name of Mujaddid Alf Thānī and Shāh Walīullah. The private library of my father had a three volume collection of Mujaddid's letters which had been printed at Ahmadī Press of Delhi. I started reading the book in compliance with the wish expressed by my brother,

but was so discouraged that I had to put it off more than once. The letters written by the Mujaddid to his spiritual mentor Khāwājā Bāqī Billāh describing his spiritual experiences and ecstatic moods were specially disconcerting to me, but my brother kept on prodding me to go through the letters along with the *Izālatul Khifā'* of Shāh Waliullah, *Sirāt-i-Mustaqīm* of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd and Shāh Isma'il Shahīd's *Mansab-i-Imāmat*. At last I made up my mind to go through all these books once for all. I felt ashamed for not being able to do what my brother had bidden. And what was this collection of letters; had it not been cherished by the most purehearted souls? Providence came to my rescue and the more I read the book, the more I found it fascinating. Now I began to understand its contents and then a time came when I became enamoured by it. It so attracted my interest that I found it more fascinating than the best literary creations. I was then passing through a most critical stage of my life: certain mental tensions and intellectual stresses and strains had put me in a turmoil. The book then came as a spiritual guide to me. I could clearly perceive the placid calm and equanimity overtaking my heart. The journey I had begun in obedience to the wishes of my brother got me through an enchanting delight.

I again started reading the Mujaddid's letters, after a short time, with the intention of classifying the ideas expressed in it under different headings. I started preparing an index of the subjects dealt with in it, for example, listing the passages dealing with the Oneness of God and repudiation of polytheistic ideas, prophethood, teachings of the Prophet and aberrations from it, non-existence of pious innovations, Unity of Being and Unity of Manifestation, reaches of intellect and intuition, and so on. The index thus prepared after several weeks' labour was kept by me in the book I had used for preparing it, so as to utilise it later on for collecting the passages according to their headings. But, somebody borrowed the book from me and it was never returned. I was saddened

more by loss of the index prepared so laboriously than of the book which could have been procured again.

Several years after this incident, perhaps in 1945 or 1946, I again thought of rearranging the different topics touched upon in these letters and presenting them with an exposition that may catch the interest of modern educated youth and acquaint him with the achievements of the Mujaddid in the field of reform and revivalism. Accordingly I undertook the task with an introductory note designed to give the substance of propositions and statements on a particular subject followed by the passages on that topic, which were scattered throughout the letters. These extracts were also to be arranged meaningfully in a systematic order, giving both the Persian text and Urdu translation with explanatory notes of difficult terms along with the *ahādīth* and supportive views of the well-known scholars and doctors of religion. The comprehensive study I had designed to undertake required a close inquiry of various issues and was surely a difficult task for a young student like me who had already been overburdened with teaching, writing and *Tabligh* activities. The result was obvious: by the time I completed the topics of Divine Unity, prophethood and apostleship it became difficult for me to continue it owing to other engagements. But, whatever of it had been written was sufficiently useful and my friend Maulānā Mohammad Manzoor Nomānī published them in his monthly journal *Al-Furqān* in four instalments during the year 1947-48.

After a few years when I started writing the history of revivalist movements, which has since appeared under the series entitled '*Saviours of Islamic Spirit*' the urge to write a biographical account of the Mujaddid engrossed my thoughts once again. In the last volume of the book I had given an account of two great Indian mystics, Khwāja Nizām-ud-dīn Auliyā and Sheikh Sharaf-ud-dīn Yahyā Manerī, belonging to the eighth century of Islamic era. I wanted to portray the life and character of the Mujaddid in the subsequent volume since it needed to be

brought into focus, for reasons more than one, in the present times of catastrophic change. I felt it necessary to restate, in clear terms, the strategy adopted by the Mujaddid for it has a greater relevance today (when the revivalist movements invariably pit themselves against the governments of their countries, from the very beginning, and plunge into difficulties). What was, after all, the method by which an ascetic had changed the entire trend and complexion of the government of his day without any means and resources? My attention had been drawn towards this fact first in the soirees of my elder brother and then by the scholarly article of Syed Manāzir Ahsan Gīlānī appearing in the special issue of the *Al-Furqān* devoted to the Mujaddid. The more I thought about the matter, the more I was convinced of the correctness of Mujaddid's approach which has been expressed by me in several of my articles and speeches[1] in Arabic.

There were still two stumbling blocks in attempting a biography of the Mujaddid. The first was that no biographical sketch of the Mujaddid could be considered complete or satisfactory without a critical assessment of the doctrines of Unity of Being and Unity of Manifestation and outlining the latter precept in some detail to demonstrate its validity. The writings on the subject have by now so copiously accumulated that it is difficult to abridge all of them or present even selected passages. Moreover, both these precepts relate to doctrinal and philosophical aspects of Islamic mysticism which cannot be understood without adequate comprehension of their terminologies and techniques depending, finally, on spiritual exercises to be experienced and mastered rather than explained in words. The author is himself a stranger to this field while most of the readers would, I suppose, be unfamiliar or rather estranged to these disciplines. How to acquit

1. I may refer, for instance, to my two speeches, one in the Azhar University, Cairo, and the other in the Islamic University, Medina, both of which have since been published.

myself of this onerous responsibility was a problem for me. On the other hand, to leave the matter untouched altogether, which is considered by some as the focal point of the Mujaddid's reformatory endeavour and the secret of his marvellous achievement, would have rendered the venture deficient and incomplete. The other difficulty was the abundant literature already existing on the subject which left no new ground to be broken nor allowed addition of one more work to it.

In regard to my first problem I decided after fully weighing the pros and cons of the matter that the Mujaddid's concepts could best be presented with the help of his own writings and the exposition of his ideas by recognised authorities and scholars belonging to his school of thought so that the readers may be led to understand the basic features of the Mujaddid's thoughts and concepts. Those who desire to pursue their studies in greater detail can then turn to the original sources or take the assistance of well-known authorities.

The way out to my second difficulty was shown by a couplet of the Poet of the East which has also found confirmation from my own experience as a writer. These verses by Iqbal could be so rendered :

Never think the cup bearer's task has finished,
The grape still has a thousand wines untouched.

Much has been written on the Mujaddid and his accomplishments, but there is room to write more, and so will it remain in future also.

Idioms and expressions, situations and circumstances and norms and values change with the times and it is not unoften that we find earlier writings as if penned in a different language requiring a new rendering to be fully comprehended by the later generations. Apart from it, every writer has his own way of interpreting things, relating causes to the effects and drawing conclusions for making them applicable to the shape of things in his own times. All these considerations convinced the writer that if a sincere effort could be made the new sketch might

prove still more useful in presenting the labours of a godly soul who devoted himself to his noble task in a calm and quiet manner with utter humility and meekness. This, I thought, would not only be useful but also prove to be a befitting presentation for the ensuing fifteenth century of the Islamic era. There is absolutely no doubt that this Renovator of Second Millennium has exerted an influence transcending the century in which he was born; and the present times, too, though seemingly changed radically, can learn a lot from him.

"My heart and pen both submit to God, humbly and meekly, in expression of gratitude to Him for enabling me to return to the *Saviours of Islamic Spirit* again after a long spell of 18 year and to write its next volume. The period intervening was so long that I had often wondered whether death would not cut short the narration of a story which has been, by the grace of God, my most popular work. Now, this volume relates to a luminary whose revivalist endeavour has already gained a recognition which is not shared by any reformer in the long history of Islamic revivalism. Such was, in fact, his success that the posterity conferred upon him the title of Mujaddid or Renovatorwith which even modern educated persons are more acquainted than his personal name. His great accomplishment, with its far-reaching influence, excels all other similar movements. These were the reasons why I wanted to write this shining chapter of Islamic history. There were also many among my readers who continuously urged me to take it up while some of my respected friends and scholars insisted upon me that I ought to give it preference over all other literary activities and occupations. The task was not so easy, however.

"Whatever matter exists in historical and biographical literature on the subject could not be presented simply by selection and abridgement. It is, in fact, insufficient for the discursive presentation of a critical research, according to modern standards, which is nowadays demanded for an intelligent comprehension of the position, and to which purpose this work commits

itself. Now, it demands a critical assessment of the intellectual and historical, moral and social and political and religious conditions of the times in which the Mujaddid undertook his great task. One has to find out what undercurrents were there in operation and what religious and intellectual unrest was fomenting in India and its neighbouring countries? What tendencies of undutifulness to Islam and its sacred law were gaining ground among the rationalists? What conspiracies against Islam were being hatched up and what hopes and aspirations were entertained after the completion of the first millennium of Islamic era by the adventurers and upstarts? What suspicions and doubts were lurking in the distrustful minds? What mischief was played, on the one hand, by philosophy and rationalism and what was done by the esoterics and Batinites, on the other, to belittle the station and place of prophethood by magnifying austerities, travails and self-mortification as the means of salvation and attaining propinquity to God? How the belief in Unity of Existence, the doctrine positing all reality as a borrowed fragment from the being of God, had opened the door of licentious freedom bordering on atheism and agnosticism."[1]

Thus, the sacred law of Islam and the Prophet's precepts were, in those days, of consequence only to a limited circle of orthodox scholars and Traditionists. Innovations in religious

1. The lines within the inverted commas were written on the 24th March, 1978, when the author had gone on a tour to the Punjab, on the insistence of Molvī Moinullah Nadwī in the *Khānqāh* adjacent to the grave of Sheikh Mujaddid Alf Thānī, by way of starting the writing of this volume. The passage dictated by the author and written by late Molvi Is'hāq Jalīs Nadwī, ex-editor of the *Tāmeer Hayāt*, was later adapted in this Introduction. It still took about a year and a half to begin the work in all seriousness. Thus the writing of the book practically started on 3rd October, 1979, but it was interrupted by two long excursions abroad with the result that the author could devote only two to three months to this book.

matters were popular while some of them going under the name of 'pious innovations' had been accepted by the entire Muslim society, without a voice raised against them. What was still worse was that both the second largest Muslim empire[1] of the time and the great Muslim community living within its limits were being forced to shift its allegiance from the Arabian Prophet and Islamic beliefs and culture to Indian philosophy, Indian culture and unity of all religions for the sake of personal ends and inclinations which had joined hands with certain foreign influences and dubious political goals. Some of the most brilliant brains of the age were acting as partners in this conspiracy, loudly giving a call to New Era, New Structure, New Millennium and New Leadership.

How was this state of affairs changed? What were the means adopted and how far did they succeed? How was it that morals were purified, characters moulded and spirits raised, from a secluded far off place in a way that the souls so guided created an awareness of God among the people, revived the *sunnah* long forgotten by the masses, prepared them to abide by the sacred law, suppressed innovations in religious beliefs and practices, quashed the evil influences of misguided mendicants preaching an absured and exaggerated rendition of the Unity of Being? In short, they revived the spirit of true faith, first in India and then in Afghānistān and Turkistān and the countries beyond like Irāq, Syria, Turkey and Arabia. They continued their efforts perseveringly at least for three centuries with such vigour and industry that we find them acknowledged as religious guides in the entire world of Islam. The fact is that the subsequent three hundred years can be called an era of their intellectual and spiritual leadership. Such

1. Only next to the Ottoman Empire, the Mughal empire in India, whose limits extended from Afghānistān to Bengal, was the most powerful kingdom with its large area, military prowess and the means and resources possessed by it.

was this universal change brought about by the potent influence exerted by the Mujaddid that every unbiased man would readily acknowledge the fact—as tersely poetised by Iqbal:

A man self-conscious shook the world.

Two more aspects of the story were to be taken into account. One of it was that in depicting a picture of the reign of Akbar and the times of Mujaddid, one could not depend on the *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh* of Mullā 'Abdul Qādir Badāūnī alone which is believed to have been written with a religious bias and assumed normally to present a dark and dismal picture of Akbar's regime. One had to cull out material from those impartial writers or penmen of Akbar's court who were not opposed to him and his policies but were rather exponents and promoters of his thoughts and ideas. Similarly it was necessary to make a critical review of the developments that started to shape in the reign of Jahāngīr and culminated during Aurangzib's time. Instead of having recourse to the writings of the Mujaddid's disciples or other literati with religious leanings, one had to bring out testimony of detached and unbiased historians in support of one's viewpoint.

It was also necessary to take a note of those numerous writings in Urdu and English, published during the last twenty-five years within India and abroad, which raise new issues, challenge some of the accepted facts and present an entirely new picture (which is quite different from the exalted and radiant portrait of the Mujaddid presented so far) on the basis of certain facts or their own interpretation of events. It would not be necessary to mention each and every remark made by them to refute their statements but any new biography of the Mujaddid ought to trace his achievements by depicting the conditions and circumstances of his age in a manner that it should demonstrate by itself the inconclusiveness of dissident statements.

With very heavy engagements which require frequent excursions within the country and ouside it, my none too good

health and lack of assistance,[1] I have tried that this volume of the *Saviours of Islamic Spirit* presenting certain new facts and materials not untilised so far in sketching a biographical account of Mujaddid Alf Thānī, should be brought out at the earliest. The thought-provoking facts it brings out and the impetus it gives to renewed efforts of renovation and reform would, perhaps, be helpful in meeting the demands of the present times and hailing the fifteenth century of the new Islamic Era (to greet which celebrations have already been held in certain parts of the Islamic world.)

Finally, I have to return my thanks to Māulāna Abul Hasan Zaid Farūqī Mujaddidī, son of Shāh Abul Khair, for making available to me some very valuable information about the Mujaddid's descendants and spiritual successors which, apparently, would have been most difficult to secure from other sources. Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizāmi, too, deserves my gratitude for kindly allowing me to use his personal library containing some precious and useful manuscripts. I am indebted to Dr. Nazir Ahmad of Muslim University, Aligarh, for extending his help to me in the task.

My thanks are also due to Syed Mohiuddin who has rendered it into English.

Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi
DAIRA SHAH 'ALAMULLAH,
RAE BARELI.

16th Ramadān
8th July, 1982

1. I would also like to express my thanks to Shams Tabrīz Khān, an associate scholar of the Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, who helped me in obtaining certain rare Persion books and also translated many a long passage for me. Nasīrul Islām Nadwī also deserves my thanks since he had been helpful in locating the passages required for presentation in the book.

CHAPTER I

ISLAMIC WORLD IN THE TENTH CENTURY

Need for the study of the tenth century conditions

Mujaddid Alf Thānī was born in Shawwāl 971 A.H.[1] and died in Safar 1034 A.H.[2] and thus his life span was spread over the last twenty-nine years of the tenth century and thirty-three years in the beginning of the eleventh century. The Mujaddid's biographer should primarily be concerned with these sixty-three years covering the closing and initial periods of the tenth and eleventh centuries of Hijrī calendar.

But, truly speaking, an era never commences with the birth of a man, howsoever great he may be, as if suddenly descending from the heavens without any trace of the past happenings or the political, moral and intellectual forces interacting on the society well before his birth. In order, therefore, to make an assessment

1. May-June, 1564 A.D.
2. November-December, 1624 A.D.

of the character and achievements of the Mujaddid, the need and nature of his revivalist movement and the forces that hampered or helped his endeavours we shall have to study the political, religious, intellectual and moral state of affairs in the then Islamic world which would have surely had an impact on his consciousness. For these would have been the conditions which would have served as an impetus for him to give his revolutionary call that made him the Renovator of the Second Millennium.

We shall have to take into account the fact that an age and its environs as well as the society are like a running stream whose every wave is impinged upon and interlinked with the other. Likewise, no country howsoever isolated from its neighbours can remain unconcerned and uninfluenced by important events, revolutions and interaction of different forces in the surrounding countries, especially when these happenings pertain to a neighbour belonging to the same faith and race. It would, therefore, not be proper for us to limit our enquiry to India alone; we shall have to run the eye over the entire world of Islam, particularly the neighbouring Muslim countries. India may not have had political relations with such countries, but religious, cultural and intellectual connexions did exist and whatever was in the wind there must have had its repercussions here.

Political conditions

Ever since the death of Sultān Salāh-ud-dīn in 589/1193 the central part of the Islamic world, better known as Middle East, had remained without a strong administration. It was after a fairly long time in the opening decades of the tenth century that it again witnessed political stability. The Arab countries of the region again gathered under the banner of one who took pride in calling himself the Defender of Faith, the Servant of the Sacred Mosques and Protector of the Muslims. He revived the Caliphate, may be in his own political interest, which had survived in Egypt more like the papacy of the Vatican, after the execution of the last Caliph Mūst'asim Billāh by the

Mongols in 656/1258. Sultān Salīm I (918-926 A.H.)[1], the founder of the Ottoman Caliphate conquered Syria in 922/1516 and then extended his dominion to Egypt in 923/1517 which had been under the sway of the Mamlūks for the last two hundred and fifty years. Salīm wrested Egypt from Qansoh Ghorī and made a declaration, in the same year, about his assumption of Caliphate and the trusteeship of the two sacred cities. The Arabian Peninsula, and thereafter all the Muslim and Arab countries of North Africa, with the exception of Morocco, gradually accepted the supremacy of Sultān Salīm I and his son Sulaimān 'Āzam al-Qanūnī (926-974 A.H.)[2], known to West as Sulaimān the Magnificent. The Mujaddid was born three years before the death of Sulaimān 'Āzam, whose reign saw the zenith of Ottoman might. His authority was firmly established, on the one hand, over Austria and Hungary in Europe and his armies were advancing victoriously, on the other, in Irān. Egypt, Syria and Irāq became part of his wide dominion. He was then sovereign of the largest empire in the world. During the rule of Sultān Murād III (982-1004 A.H.)[3] Cyprus, Tunisia and some of the fertile parts of Irān and Yemen fell to the Ottoman Empire. It was during his reign that the Grand Mosque of K'aba was reconstructed in 984/1577. The Mujaddid, then a young man, must have heard of these happenings and derived satisfaction, like other Muslims of India, for the Turks were orthodox Hanafites like them.

In the beginning of this century (905/1500) the Safawids rose to power in Irān and Khurāsān. Ismā'il Safawī (905-930 A.H.)[4] was the founder of Safawid dynasty who gradually consolidated his control over the area. Safawids were rivals of the Ottoman Turks and had, contrary to the Ottomans, declared

1. A.D. 1512-1520
2. A.D. 1520-1566
3. A.D. 1574-1595
4. A.D. 1500-1524

Shi'ism, more precisely, the doctrine of the Twelvers, as the state religion of Persia. Taking full advantage of the power wielded by him, Ismā'il resolved to convert the whole of Irān to his religion and was eminently successful in his efforts. His collision with the Sunnite Ottomans, whose coreligionists were spread over the entire area from Constantinople to Lahore and Delhi, saved Irān from getting merged in the great Ottoman Empire. The Safawid dynasty ruled over the area extending from Baghdād to Hirāt.

Shāh 'Abbās I (995-1037 A.H.)[1] or 'Abbās the Great was the most successful sovereign of the Safawid dynasty who can be compared to Shāhjahān for his architectural activities. Contemporaneous with the Mujaddid, the Safawid might was at its zenith during his rule. He fought the Ottomans to recover Karbala and Najaf. The Safawid dynasty declined after Shāh 'Abbās I whose reign in Irān is coeval with that of Akbar and Jahāngir in India.

Another important part of the Islamic world in the east was Turkistān which had been a centre of Islamic culture, arts and literature for several centuries. Known as Tansoxania in the medieval literature, it was here that most assiduous efforts were made, after Irāq, to codify the Hanafite system of Islamic law. Among the important books compiled there were the *Sharah Waqāyah* and the *Hidāyah* which are still studied as text books in India. The Naqshbandiyah school of Islamic mysticism, to which the Mujaddid and his precursors belonged, originated and developed in Transoxania and was taken from there to other parts of the Islamic world. Shaibānī dynasty of the Uzbegs assumed command over the area in the beginning of the tenth century (905/1500 A.H.) and, except for a brief period in 915/1510 when Bābur had captured Samarqand with the help of the Safawids, retained its control up to the middle of the eighteenth century of the Christian era. Two rulers of the Shaibāni dynasty,

1. A.D. 1587-1627

'Ubaid Ullah bin Muhammad (918-946 A.H.)[1] and 'Ubaid Ullah bin Askandar (964/1006)[2] made their capital at Bukhārā a centre of political power throbbing with arts and culture.

Afghānistān was the immediate neighbour of India to its west. In the beginning of the tenth century it rapidly changed hands between the Uzbegs and Safawids of Irān with occasional insurrections raised by local adventurers. Kābul and Qandhār were alternately possessed by the Mughals and Iranians, while Herāt, lying at the borders of Irān, was more often dominated by the Safawids. Bābur occupied Qandhār in 928/1522 but shifted his headquarters to India after the invasion and conquest of the country from where he ruled over Kābul, Badakhshān and Qandhār. Thereafter Afghānistān was ushered in a comparatively stable and peaceful period of its history as the land lying between two powerful kingdoms of India and Irān. The country was, however, divided between the two: Hirāt and Sistān remained under the control of Irān and Kābul became a part of the Mughal Empire in India. Nevertheless, Hirāt and Sīstān continued to suffer from frequent incursions by the Uzbegs; Qandhār remained a bone of contention between the Mughals and the Irānians; the area to the north of Kohistān passed into a semi-independent kingdom under Bābur's cousin Sulaimān Mirza whom the former had given the charge of Badakhshān while the remaining parts of the country were held by the Shaibānīs. Qandhār was captured by Tahmasp of Persia in 965/1558 and remained under the control of Iranians until 1003/1595 when it was surrendered to Akbar by a Safawid prince, Muzaffar Husain Mirzā. Thus, Afghānistān continued as a dependency of India up to the middle of the twelfth century when Nādir Shāh finally brought the two hundred and forty years' old rule of the Mughals to an end in 1151/1738.

The Lodis held the reign of government in India at the

1 A.D. 1512-1539
2. A.D. 1557-1597

commencement of the tenth century. The last ruler of Lodī dynasty, Ibrāhīm Lodī suffered defeat and was killed in 932/1526, fighting against Bābur who laid the foundation of the longest and most stable Muslim dynasty to rule over India. The Lodis, true to Afghān traditions, were orthodox Hanafites who disliked non-conformity in religious matters and secularism in political affairs. The greatest of the Lodī kings was Sikandar Lodī (923/1517), a pious and generous sovereign, who held scholars in great respect. The country was also fortunate to have a ruler like Sher Shāh Sūri, though he held the reins of government for a brief period from 946/1540 to 952/1545, in the tenth century. India had not seen a king more pious and learned, adept in administration and benevolent than Sher Shāh Sūri. The country did not attain stability and administrative efficiency, nor peace and prosperity after him until Akbar ascended the throne. Sher Shāh's successor Salım Shāh Sūri was, however, not gifted with the great qualities of his father. Harassed by the victorious charges of Sher Shāh Sūri and the treachery of his brothers, Humāyūn had hard time in ruling over India until he returned again with the help afforded to him by Tahmāsp Safawī of Irān. Akbar took the reins of government in his hands in 963/1556 and ruled over the country for half a century.

Jahāngır mounted the thrown during the lifetime of the Mujaddid, when he was 43 years of age, and he also died during the reign of Jahāngır. Besides the imperial government with its capital at Delhi, there also existed independent kingdoms of Gujarāt, Bijāpūr, Golconda and Ahmadnagar in Deccan, of which the last three were ruled by kings belonging to the Shi'ite sect.

Religious conditions

Islam still had a strong grip over the minds and hearts of the then Muslims. The masses had firm faith in the soundness of religious truths and were endowed with zeal for their religion. Some were, no doubt, guilty of occasional lapses, but the great

majority hated infidelity and polytheism.

The overwhelming public opinion favouring conformity with the religion had always compelled the Muslim sovereigns, who were otherwise autocrates as well as powerful enough to make the blood of European rulers run cold, to acclaim Islamic traditions and proclaim their willingness to protect the Faith. They never found favour with the people nor commanded respect of the populace unless they laid open their zeal for Islam. The Ottoman Sultān Salīm I achieved stability only after he had assumed the titles of Caliph and Servant of the two holy cities of Mecca and Madina and publicly paid homage to the sacred places during his stay in Damascus. He sent forth a caravan of pilgrims for Haj from Damascus in Dhil Hijja 923 A.H.[1], and provided, for the first time, a covering for the K'aba as a presentation from the Turkish sovereign. It was then that the Turkish rulers were acknowledged as Caliph-Sultān which increased their prestige tremendously. Sulaimān the Magnificent was a man of simple habits whose whole life offers several examples of his deep attachment to Islam. He prepared eight copies of the holy Qur'ān in his own hand which are still preserved at Sulaimāniyah. The poems written by him give expression to his fervour and unflinching faith in Islam. He got the K'aba reconstructed, on the authority of Mufti Abus Saūd's[2] (d. 952/1545) juristic opinion, which was completed[3] in 984/1576 by Sultān Murād. These were some of the achievements of Ottoman rulers during the tenth century.

The people in Iran, too, had a religious bent of mind. This popular sentiment of the masses was turned to their advantage by the Safawid rulers who gained popularity and strength through display of their love and respect for the progeny of the holy Prophet. Shāh 'Abbās, the most successful among the Safawid

1. December, 1517 A.D.
2. The author of the *Tafsīr Abus Saūd*
3. The holy shrine still stands on the same foundation.

kings, not only covered on foot 800 miles from Isfahān to Meshhad but himself sweeped the grave of Caliph 'Ali in Najaf. The confiding trust Iranians had placed in Shāh 'Abbās I, came nigh to a credulous belief which had given rise to many a superstitious fables about him.

The people of Afghānistān and Turkistān have always been known for their strong convictions, religious fervour and attachment to the Hanafite school of Sunnism. These popular sentiments of the people have also been upheld by the elite, the nobles and rulers of these lands, though, according to their own levels and standards.

The Muslim rule in India was established by the Afghāns and Turks and therefore the religiosity of the people reflected their characteristics—strong faith and singleness of heart. Hanafite law and practices have been followed in this country, except in a few coastal areas in the south including Malabar, from the very beginning of Muslim rule. It was here that some of the important legal treatises like the *Fatāwā Tatārkhāni* and *Fatāwā Qāzi Khān* came to be written[1].

Several kings in the annals of Muslim India stand out for their zeal to uphold the Islamic law and the *sunnah* and suppression of aberrations and innovations and heterodox ideas. To cite the names of a few, Muhammad Tughluq and Firoz Tughluq in the eighth century and Sultān Sikandar Lodī in the tenth century made these the cornerstone of the state policy. Religious precepts were followed, according to the authors of the *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, *Tārikh Firishta* and *Tārikh Dāwūdi*, so scrupulously as if a new way of life had taken roots in the country during the reign of Sikandar Lodī. According to these historians, Sikandar Lodī was devout and orthodox from his childhood who preferred the demands of faith over his own inclinations and desires. He

1. Long before the compilation of the *Fatāwā 'Ālamgiri*, these books were written here and became popular in Egypt, Syria and Irāq under the name of the *Fatāwā Hindiyah*.

was a great patron of learning and it was through his persuation that the Kā'isthās among the Hindus took up the study of Persian language. Sikandar prohibited the annual procession of the spear of Salār Mas'ūd throughout his dominions and forbade women from paying a visit to the tombs of the saints. He is also reported to have prohibited taking out of the *T'aziā* processions and the worship of *Sitla*, the goddess of smallpox,[1] by the Muslims. The author of Wāqi'āt Mushtāqi writes that a large number of spurious tombs which had become objects of popular regard were dug out and tanks were constructed in their place.[2]

Sultān Salīm used himself to lead the congregational prayers and abstained from everything forbidden by the *shari'ah*.

This was the age of faith in which the popularity of mysticism had led to institutionalization of the system in every part of the Islamic world. There was not one country or region where the environment was not conducive to the flourishing Sufi disciplines or where one or the other branches of Sufi brotherhoods had not taken its message to every home. In Turkistān, Bukhārā and Samarkand were the two most famous intellectual and spiritual centres; the same position was occupied by Herāt and Badakhshān in Afghānistān, Alexandria and Tantah in Egypt, and T'az and Sanā in Yemen. Hadramaut was the home of a great mystic family known as Bā Alvi 'Aidrūs while Shaikh Abū Bakr b. 'Abdullah b. Abū Bakr was regarded as the most pious and godly soul of his time in that region. Tarim was the home of another mystic family of Saiyids popular as Āl-i-Bā 'Alvi. Yet another famous mystic saint of the time was Shaikh S'ad b. 'Ali as-Saw'īnī Bāmazhaj-as-Sa'eed. Shaikh Muhī-ud-dīn 'Abdul Qādir 'Aidrūsī (978-1037 A.H.)[3] has given a detailed description of Shaikh S'ad b. 'Alī in the *An-Nūr as-Sāfir fi Rijāl al-Qarn*

1. *Tārikh Hindustān*, Vol. II, p. 374
2. *Waqiāt Mushtāqi* cited from the First Indian Afghan Empire in India, p. 250
3. A.D. 1570-1628

al-'Āshir.

In the tenth century India we find the Qādirīyah and Chishtiyah orders represented by their branches under the name of Nizāmiyah and Sābirīvah respectively, and both these schools had a number of godly men known for their spirituality and piety. Yet, of a fact, the century belonged to the Shattāriyah order which could be deemed to have taken charge of the spiritual realm from the Chishtiyahs and won over the whole country[1].

The founder of Shattāriyah order was Shaikh 'Abdullah Shattār of Khurāsān who came to India probably in the beginning of the ninth century and settled at Māndū. He died in 832/1429 and was buried within the fort of Māndū. Living like the rich, he attained the higher states of ecstatic rapture and countless people benefited from him. His order spread rapidly in the country but not before it bifurcated into two branches; one of it is traced to Shaikh Muhammad Ghauth (d. 970/1563) of Gwalior with three persons intervening between him and Shaikh 'Abdullah Shattār. The other branch was headed by Shaikh 'Ali b. Qawwām of Jaunpūr (also known as Shaikh 'Ali 'Āshiqān of Sarā'i Mir) with two intervening links connecting him to Shaikh 'Abdullah Shattār. The Shattāri order was perhaps the first to attempt a fusion of *yoga* with

1. Madāriyah order founded by Shaikh Badī-ud-dīn Madār Makanpūrī (d. 844/1440) also existed in India during that period. The followers of this order publicised in words as well as in deeds the doctrine of Unity of Being by displaying complete dependence on God and abstention from all externality to the extent of wearing only loincloth. With the passage of time the order deteriorated to a sort of syncretistic sect giving rise to such a liberatine conduct by its followers that the word *Madāri* became synonymous with a conjurer. In the tenth century itself the order had lost its appeal to the elite. *Nuzhatul Khwātir's* fourth volume which gives a biographical sketch of all the eminent sufis belonging to different orders, mentions only two sufis associated with the Madāri order of that period.

sufism by adopting practices like meditative postures and suspension of breathing and even the practice of occult sciences. A detailed account of these yogic practices has been given in the *Risāla Shattāriyah*[1] of Bahā-ūd-dīn b. Ibrāhim Ansāri al-Qādrī. Shaikh Muhammad Shattāri's *Kalīd Makhāzin* clearly upholds the Unity of Being alluding to a parallelism between the Shaikh and the Brahmin, and the mosque and the temple, all of which manifest or rather reveal the borrowed fragments of the Divine Being. In his view all the phenomenal objects are inseparable parts of the same Essence of Unity. His description of the doctrine is concluded with a verse which says:

Smitten with love, a Shattāri he became—
Comforter of humanity. [2]

In another tract of the same order entitled *Risālah 'Ishqiyah* agnosticism is likened to majesty of love and Islam to the grace of love, followed by a couplet, saying—

Belief and disbelief, one is nigh to other;
One without infidelity, is not a believer. [3]

It also goes on to say that:—

"Knowledge is the greatest veil: its object is worship, yet it is in itself the greatest covering. If this veil of secrecy were to be pulled down, infidelity and Islam would get blended, one with the other, and the real significance of Godhood and worship would come up."[4]

An influential and eminent Shaikh of the Shattārī order was Shaikh Muhammad Ghauth (d. 970/1563) of Gwalior who enjoyed a great popular regard among the masses. His pomp and pride vied with the pageantry of the nobles and grandees of his time. His *jāgīr* or the freehold estate yielded an income of nine hundred thousand rupees annually and he had forty

1. Nadwatul Ulama Manuscript No. 48, pp.47-49
2. *Kalid -Makhāzin*, pp.196-99.
3 *Risālah Ishqiyah*, p.71
4 *Ibid.*, p. 73.

elephants besides an army of servants and attendants. Whenever he passed through the markets of Agra, large crowds used to assemble to pay their respect to him. He used to return their salutations kneeling down on his horse which made it difficult for him to sit upright on the horseback. Mullā 'Abdul Qādir Badāūni relates that he had artfully enlisted Emperor Akbar to his spiritual order but the latter somehow got rid of his tutelage. Regardless of his fanfare or rather royal bearings he was renowned for living in absolute poverty like a mendicant. While saluting others, whether a Muslim or a non-Muslim, he used to bend as if in prayer to which an exception was taken by the religious scholars. His writings, particularly, the *Jawāhir Khamsah, M'irājiyah,*[1] *Kanzal-Wāhdah* and *Bahr-al-Hayāt,*[2] became very popular and helped in spreading his order throughout India.

Shaikh 'Ali b. Qawwām Jaunpūrī, also known as 'Ali 'Āshiqān of Sirā'i Mīr (d. 955/1548), Shaikh Lashkar Muhammad of Burhānpūr (d.993/1585) and Shaikh Allah Bakhsh of Garh Mukteshwar (d. 1002/1594) were prominent spiritual guides of the time who achieved great popularity among the masses. The biographers of Shaikh 'Ali 'Āshiqān of Sirā'i Mīr are on record that his miraculous deeds outnumber the miracles worked by any other sufi saint since the time of Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir Jilāni.[3] Another distinguished spiritual guide of those days was Shaikh Ziāullah Akbarābādī (d. 1005/1597). He was

1. In this book he laid a claim to ascention which raised a tumult among the circle of scholars in Gujarāt which subsided only when he was vindicated by an eminent scholar, Shaikh Wajīh-ud-dīn Gujarāti who explained away his awkward pretence.

2. The book is a translation of the *Amar Kund.* Muhammad Ikārm writes about it in the *Rod-i-Kauthar:* "This book describes, in Persian, the doctrines and exercises of Hindu yogis. In an earlier work known as the *Jawāhir Khamsa* he had made but a brief mention of these matters. This work throws light on the proximate thoughts of Shattāriyah order and the *yoga* of the Hindus." (pp.24-36)

3. For details see 'Arif Ali's *Al-Āshiqiyah* and *Nuzhatal Khawātir,* Vol. 'A

the son and spiritual successor of Shaikh Muhammad Gauth of Gwalior and had the honour of being taught by 'Allāma Wajīh-ud-dīn. Thirty-five years of his life he spent at Akbarābād, the capital of Emperor Akbar, as the object of people's affection and was several times requested to grace the Emperor's court by his presence. 'Abdul Qādir Badāūnī writes that when he once saluted the Shaikh in the usual manner, he felt slighted and began to jest with him and mocked at him. Badāūnī does not hold a good opinion about him and has shown how he used to play pranks with others.[1]

In addition to these, there were also Shāh 'Abdullah of Sandīla (924-1010 A.H.)[2] and Shaikh 'Isā' b. Qāsim Sindī, a Khalifa or spiritual successor of Lashkar Muhammad 'Arif billah, who was a contemporary of the Mujaddid. Both were prominent Shaikhs of Shattāriyah order.[3] There were still others belonging to other sufi disciplines. One of these was Shaikh Chain-ladah of Sohna[4] (d. 997/1589) who used to impart instruction in sufi tracts such as the *Fasūs* and the *Naqd-un-Nusūs* to his pupils. The Emperor placed great confidence in him but once he saw the Shaikh reciting inverted prayers and turned away from him. Another was Shāh 'Abdur Razzāq (886-949)[5] of Jhanjhana subscribing to the Qādiriyah and Chishtiyah orders. Although a man of learning, he ardently upheld the doctrine of the Unity of Being and wrote several treatises in defence of Shaikh Akbar's ideas on the subject. Yet another mystic of the time, Shaikh 'Abdul 'Azīz Shakarbār (858-975)[6], though blessed with ecstatic transports, placed trust in the Unity of Being. He also used to instruct his disciples in the *Fasūs* and its commentary. He was one

1. See *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh*, Vol. III and *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. V.
2. A.D. 1518-1601.
3. *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. V.
4. A town in Gurgaon district of the Indian Punjab where there is a spring of hot water.
5. A.D. 1481-1542
6. A.D. 1454-1567

of the maternal forefathers of Shāh Walī Ullah.

This was also the time when distinguished virtues and spiritual perfection of Shaikh ʿAbdul Quddūs of Gangoh (d. 944/1537) had imparted a new life to Sābiriyah branch of Chishtiyah order. He believed in the doctrine of Unity of Being and openly preachad it. Shaikh Qutb-ud-dīn Binādil (d. 925/1519) was the chief protagonist of Qalandariyah order at Jaunpūr and Shaikh Kamāl-ud-dīn (d. 971/1564) occupied a distinguished place among the followers of Qādiriyah school at Khaithal in Ambala, and both had popularised their mystic orders. Mujaddid relates his father as telling him about Shaikh Kamāl: "If one were to see from the eyes of heart, one would not find another spiritual guide occupying an exalted position like him in the Qādiriyah order save, of course, Shaikh ʿAbdul Qādir."[1] In Oudh Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn of Amethi alias Bandagī Miān (900-979)[2] was an eminent Shaikh of the Chishtiyah order who scrupulously followed the dictates of the *shariʿah* and the *sunnah* of the Prophet. He used to place reliance on the *Ihyā'ul ʿUloom* along with the *ʿAwarif* and the *Risālah Makkiyah*. Once he found a man with the *Fasūs*, he took it away from him and gave him another book to read. Musical recitation was a common feature of the order followed by him, but he used to avoid it.[3]

This was the religious and spiritual atmosphere prevailing in the world of Islam, particularly in India, where mystic guides belonging to different sufi orders and with varying levels of spiritual attainments had established their own centres of spiritual guidance for the people. The commonality as well as the elite which were deeply religious, usually attached themselves to one or the other of these teachers of spiritual truth. We have given it here in a bit detail so that one may clearly perceive the aptitudes and inclinations of the people at the time Mujaddid

1. *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*
2. A.D. 1495-1571.
3. *Nazhatul Khawātir*, Vol. IV

was born and the possibilities and difficulties of any revivalist effort in the prevailing atmosphere.

Intellectual Milieu

Tenth century of the Islamic era was not an age of intellectual awakening and creative thought nor any significant addition was made to the thought, science or culture already existing during the period. The keen sense of intellectual curiosity which had rendered Islamic history specially illustrious in the world annals had gradually declined from the second half of the eighth century when we find such sharp-witted scholars as Hāfiz Ibn Taimiyah (d. 728/1328), Taqī-ud-din b. Daqīq al-'Id (d. 702/1303),' Alā'-ud-dīn al-Bāji (d. 714/1314), Jamāl-ud-dīn 'Abul Hajjāj al-Mizzī (d. 742/1341), Shams-ud-dīn al-Zahabī (d. 748/1347) and Abū Hayyan Nahwī (d. 745/1344) who made valuable contributions to sciences of *hadīth* (Traditions), *kalām* (dialectics), *tārīkh* (history) and *rijāl* (biographies) and produced literature of the highest order. This was the period which witnessed the great Traditionist Ibn Hajr al-'Asqalānī (d. 852/1448) whose monumental work entitled the *Fath al-Bārī*, a commentary on the *Sahīh Bukhāri*, was received as the most perfect work giving finishing touches to the *Sahīh*.

In the tenth century the intellectual pursuits were limited to compilations, reproductions, commentaries and summations of the earlier works. In the beginning of this century there had, however, been such eminent scholars as Shams-ud-dīn Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497) and Jalāl-ud-dīn Suyūtī (d. 911/1505). The former is regarded as one of the greatest scholars of Traditions, biographical notices and history, second only to Shams-ud-dīn al-Zahabī, after whom these disciplines gradually declined. His two works, the *Fath-al-Mughith b'Sharh al-Fiyat-il-Hadīth* on the subject of principles and technical terms of *hadīth* and the *Al-Zau-ul-Lām'e l'ahl al-Qarn al-Tās'e* on the biographical notices are still without a parallel in their fields. Likewise, Suyūtī is the well-known scholar of Islamic history, some of whose

works have the sweep of an encyclopaedia on the subjects covered by them. The first half of the *Tafsīr Jalālain,* written by Suyūtī has all along been studied as a text-book and kept his memory fresh in the minds of educated persons.

In the tenth century *hadīth* and *rijāl* were accorded greater importance by the scholars of Egypt, Syria and Irāq, *mantiq* (logic) and philosophy were the favourite subjects of study in Irān and *fiqah* (jurisprudence) of the Hanafite school constituted the touchstone of scholarly excellence in Turkistān and India. The savants of the time were Ahmad b. Muhammad Qastālānī (d. 923/1517), a commentator of the *Sahīh Bukhāri,* and Shaikh-ul-Islam Zakariyah Ansarī (d. 925/1519) in Egypt; the well-known exegete Abūs Sa'ūd (d. 952/1545) in Turkey; and in Hijaz Ibn Hajr Haitami (d. 974/1566) who had written *As-Sawā'iq al-Muhriqa* along with several other works, and 'Ali Muttaqi (d. 975/1567), the author of the *Kanz-al-'Ummāl.* Another scholar and man of letters was Mullā 'Ali Qārī who was born in Herāt (Afghānistān) but had settled down in Mecca where he taught a large number of students. He died in 1014/1605 but his scholarly endeavours can properly be placed in the tenth century. Qutb-ud-dīn Nahrwalī[1] was also a litterateur and historian who was born in India and died in 990/1582. Famous for his work, the *Al-'Aylām fi Akhbār Bait Allāh al-Harām,* he was venerated by the nobles and sultans of Hajāz and Turkey for his deep learning.

Irān could justly boast of its academicians in the tenth century. There were Jalāl-ud-dīn Dawwānī (d. 918/1512), Mullā 'Imād b. Mahmūd Tārmī (d. 941/1534) and Ghiyāth-ud-dīn Mansūr (d. 948/1541) who were talked about even in India. Among the distinguished scholars who were widely known towards the end of the tenth century, one was Shaikh Muhummad b. As-Shaikh Abī al-Hasan of Egypt. He was known as

1. Anhilāwarā in Gujarāt, arabicised as Nahrwāla, is the ancient name of Pattan. It was captured by Mahmūd of Ghazni in 416/1025.

Al-Ustāz al-'Āzam and Qutb al-'Ārifīn. As a teacher in the great University of Al-Azhar, he was famous for shedding new light and elucidating the intricacies of Qurānic texts, *hadīth* and *fiqah*. Apart from being a pedagogue, he was also a poet and a spiritual guide of no mean achievement. He died in 993/1585. Rahmat Ullah b. 'Abdullah Sindhī (d. 994/1586) was also an Indian scholar of Traditions who taught at Mecca during this period. 'Allamā Wajīh-ud-dīn b. Nasr Ullah of Gujarāt was another scholar of this period who taught religious and secular sciences over half a century and brought up many an eminent pedagogue. His disciples continued to impart instruction and enlightenment to others for a hundred years. Wajīh-ud-dīn also belonged to the latter half of this century for he left this fleeting world in 998/1590. Yemen had, during this period, carved out a place for itself in the world of learning. The well-known scholar of *hadīth*, Tāhir b. Husain b. 'Abdur Rahmān al-Ahdāl taught a large number of students there. He died in 998/1590.[1]

The scholars of Irān had, by that time, started coming to India and many of these were pupils of Jalāl-ud-dīn Dawwānī, Mullā 'Imād b. Mahmūd Tārmī and Mīr Giyāth-ud-dīn Mansūr. Maulana Zain-ud-dīn Mahmūd, the bow-maker, who had been a disciple of Maulānā Jāmī and 'Abdul Ghafoor Lārī, had arrived in India during Humāyūn's time and was received with the highest marks of honour by the king. During the reign of Akbar the three brothers, Hakīm Abdul Fath Gilānī, Hakīm Humāyūn *alias* Hakīm Humām and Nūr-ud-dīn Qararī had emigrated from Gilān and attained high positions in the imperial court. After a short while Mullā Muhammad Yazdi arrived from Irān. Amīr Fath Ullah Shīrāzī came after a brief stay at Bījāpūr. An intimate pupil of Mīr Giyāth-ud-dīn Mansūr, he brought the writings of the Irānian scholars to India. He was honoured with the post of Sadr in 993/1586. The curriculum and syllabus then prevalent in India were

1. See *An-Nūr as-Sāfir*, pp.414-439.

deeply influenced by him and these ultimately developed into what later on came to be known as the *Dars-i-Nizāmi*, which still dominates the Arabic madrasas of the country.[1]

We also come across the names of a large number of scholars and men of letters belonging to Nishāpūr, Astarābād, Jurjān, Māzandarān and Gilān in the court annals, specially those of the south Indian kingdoms.[2]

Afghānistan was the land known for its manly arts but it was not altogether destitute of mental cultivation. Qāzī Muhammad Aslam Harwī (d. 1061/1651) who came towards the end of his life's journey to India was born in Herāt and had studied in the land of his birth under Muhammad Fāzil of Badakhshān. Muhammad Ṣādiq Ḥalwā'i was also a distinguished scholar of Afghānistān. Herāt, close to the borders of Irān, was a centre of learning in those dāys. Qāzī Muhammad Aslam Harwī was one of its eminent scholars. His son Muhammad Zāhid (widely known to Indian scholars as Mīr Zāhid) was a paragon of learning in discursive sciences. His three commentaries known as the *Zawāhid Thalāthā* were, for a long time, keenly studied by the scholars.

Iranian literati and their creations were not the only source of enlightenment to the Indian scholars who were constantly in touch with the scholars of the Qur'ān and *hadīth* in Egypt, Hijāz and Yemen. Shaikh Rājeh b. Dawūd of Gujarāt (d. 904/1499) studied *hadīth* from 'Allāma Sakhāwī who told him about the opinion held by Shaikh al-'Ula al-Bukhārī al-Hanafī in regard to Ibn 'Arabī. He also asked his pupil to warn the scholars of India about the indiscriminate reverence paid by them to Ibn 'Arabī[3]. Sakhāwī has made a mention of his Indian student in the

1. For a detailed account see Hakim S. 'Abdul Ha'i Hasani's *Al-Thaqāfat il-Islāmiyah fil Hind* or its Urdu version entitled *Islami Uloom-o-Funūn Hindustān men*, specially the chapter *Hindustān ka Nisāb-i-Dars*.
2. *Nazhātul Khawātir*, Vol. IV
3. *Ibid.*

Al-Zaū'l-lam'e which shows that he held a very high opinion about the intelligence and learning of Rājeh b. Dawūd. The greatest authority of the time in the science of *hadīth* was Shaikh 'Ali b. Ḥosām-ud-dīn al-Muttaqī, the author of *Kanz-ul-'Ummāl*. The entire world, it is said, lies under an obligation to Suyūti, but Suyūti himself is indebted to 'Ali al-Muttaqi. Abul Hasan As-Shāfe'ī al-Bakrī who taught within the holy precincts of the mosque of K'aba and Shahāb ud-dīn Ahmad b. Ḥajar Makkī, the well-known traditionist and jurisconsult of Mecca had been the teachers of Shaikh 'Ali al-Muttaqī.

These descriptions would have made it clear that the Indian Peninsula, though bounded by lofty mountains and deep oceans, was not intellectually isolated from the outside world. It had maintained contact with other centres of culture and learning through the mountainous and rugged passes of Khaibar and Bolān. It is no doubt true that India had, in the times we are talking about, absorbed and imported to an extent greater than it could itself export and benefit others, but that was only natural for it had received both, the faith and the knowledge, by way of Turkistān and Irān.

Intellectual and Religious Disquietude

This survey of intellectual, religious and educational conditions of the tenth century would, however, remain incomplete without giving an account of the intellectual unrest and religious inconstancy found at certain places both in India and its neighbouring countries. Its description becomes all the more necessary lest one should think that the stream of life was flowing smoothly without any unbroken or unebbing surge for thousands of miles wherein the ship of religious edification and moral and spiritual guidance could go full speed without any danger hidden beneath the surface of water. Had it been so, the efforts made for renovation of faith during the period would have more appropriately been called instruction and edification or preaching of Islam than revival and renaissance. India was situated at a far

off distance from the Islamic cultural centres which happened to be situated in Hijāz, Egypt, Syria and Irāq; Islam had reached this country through a circuitous route *via*, Irān, and Turkistān; neither Arabic was prevalent here nor the knowledge of *hadīth* was common which helps to distinguish aberration and innovation from the right path and impart an understanding of the true faith; great difficulties existed in the journey for *haj* or for receiving higher religious education; and the Muslim minority was socially integrated with a predominantly Hindu society which was firmly wedded to its superstitious beliefs and un-Islamic customs —all these factors had combined to make the Indian Muslims of that period susceptible to erratic calls of non-conformist sects, or, one can say, made the Indian Muslim society an easy hunting ground for religious adventurers.

Aggressive Shi'ism of Iranian origin which took roots at certain places in the South India and Kashmir was but one in a series of such perversions. Burhān Nizām Shāh of Ahmadnagar had, in the middle of the tenth century, adopted Shi'ism under the influence of an Ismā'ilite Shaikh Tāhir b. Rāzī who had been forced to flee from Iran by the Iranian monarch Shāh Ismā'il Safawī. Moved by his intemperate faith, he ordered public cursing of the first three Caliphs, through the streets and the mosques and bazars, especially employed people for this purpose and killed and imprisoned a large number of Sunnites for opposing his sacrilegious acts.[1] Mīr Shams-ud-dīn of Irāq made indefatigable efforts to spread Shi'ism in Kashmir and converted 34,000 Hindus to his faith. It is also reported that he invented a new religion which was called Nūr Bakhshī and wrote a book on the jurisprudence of his faith which differed from the Sunnite law as well as the law of the Imāmiyah sect of Shi'ites. Historians are also on record that a new sect was born in Kashmir which believed that Saiyid Muhammad Nūr Bakhsh was the Mahdī or the

1. *See* the details given by Muhammad Qāsim Bijāpūrī in *Tarikh Firishta*, although the author was himself a Shi'ite.

promised Messiah.[1]

In 950/1543 Humayūn made his way into Persia to seek the help of Shāh Tahmasp who asked Humāyūn to adopt the religious tenets of the Shiāhs. Humāyūn after much ado said, "Bring them written upon a sheet of paper", and just read them out.[2] There is no reliable evidence to show that Humāyūn had abjured his faith, but he must have been impressed by the splendid reception and help he had received in his hour of need from Persia. The benignity should have, however, created a soft corner for Shī'ism in the heart of Humāyūn whose Timurid forefathers had been orthodox Sunnīs and some even bound by an oath of allegiance to the saints of Naqshbandiyah order. Humayūn was cultured and considerate with an excess of kindliness, always maintained the state of ablution and never mentioned God and His Apostle without ritual purification. He died on the 15th of Rabī-ul-Awwal 963 A.H.,[3] after he had slipped from the stairs of of his library where he had sat down on hearing the call of the *mu'azzin.*

Among the nobles and grandees of Humāyūn, Bairam Khān was a man of great talents. He was generous and sincere, possessed a goodness of disposition, attended the congregational prayers punctually and paid due reverence to the scholars and saints, but preferred 'Ali, the fourth Caliph, over the first three. In one of his couplets he says:

A king whose tiara surpasses the seven heavens; if not a slave of 'Alī, let there be dust on his head.

Mīr Sharīf 'Āmlī was a man well-versed in secular sciences. He came to India in the reign of Akbar who received him with kindness and appointed him, first in 993/1585, as the governor of Kābul and then, in 999/1591, as the governor of Bengal. He

1. *See* the details given by Muhammad Qāsim Bijāpūrī in *Tārīkh Firishta,* although the author was himself a Shi'ite.
2. *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh,* Vol. I, p. 445
3. 26th January, 1551, A.D.

was given freehold lands or *jāgīrs* in Ajmer and Mohān. Khwāfi Khān, author of the *Ma'āsir al-Umarā*, says that, Mīr Sharīf Āmlī had heretic leanings, mixed up philosophy with mysticism and believed in what was called *'Ayniyāt* or glimpse of the Truth.

Two more thought currents fraught with divisive tendencies were extremely detrimental to Islam in India. One of these was the Zikrī doctrine of a sect which believed that on the completion of one thousand years of Islam a new prophethood would show its face. The sect flourished in Baluchistān but according to the millenarian belief of its adherents the prophet of the sect had revealed himself at Attock in 977/1569. The author of the book "*Who are Zikris*," writes about Mullā Muhammad, the founder of this schism :

> "He appeared in a human form, donning the dress of the mendicants, descending from the celestial regions to the earth, on the peak of lofty mountain in Attock at dawn in a monday night of 977/1569."[1]

The Zikrīs regarded Mullā Muhammad as the Seal of the Prophets, the best of all the apostles of God and His essence or *Nūr*, and also, as the first and last of all creation. Another work of the sect known as *Mūsā Nāmah* says :

> "God said, O Moses, I have not sent any Prophet after Mahdī. He will be sent as the light of those who will be born first and in the last."[2]

Several other books, such as, the *M'erāj Nāmah* (Mss.), *Thanā'i Māhdī*, *Safar Nāmah Mahdī* and *Zikr-i-Ilāhī* include passages extolling Mullā Muhammad to a position higher than all the prophets of God including the Prophet of Islam. They also exhibit the ingenuity of their authors in distorting and mis-interpreting or even shamelessly imputing certain sayings to earlier authorities. They had invented an article of faith for their sect, saying: "There is no god but God: Pure light of

1. *Who are Zikris*, p. 13
2. *Ibid.*, p. 118

Muhammad Mahdī, the Prophet of God." They made fun of those who performed prayers and dubbed them as heretics.[1]

They rejected fasting, *haj* and *zakāt* and instead of pilgrimage to the K'aba, deemed it essential to make a pilgrimage to the hill named *Koh-i-Murād*.[2] According to the *Tārīkh-Khawānin-i-Belūch* the Zikrī sect, which was very hostile to Islam, had gained considerable strength in certain parts of Baluchistān. The followers of this sect executed Muslims on the charge of performing prayers. Mīr Nasīr Khān 'Āzam, who re-introduced the *shari'ah*, had to struggle hard against the un-Islamic and heretic practices of the Zikrīs. He ultimately succeeded in completely destroying this heretical sect after fighting many a sanguine battle against them.[3]

The other sect giving faith to certain doctrines of dubious nature was Roshanā'iyah. Its role in trying to arrest the decline of Afghān political power and to check the growing influence of the Mughals raises issues that demand re-examination of the allegations made by the writers of those times.[4] How far this schism was politically motivated and what historical facts support this view are some of the issues requiring a deeper study. There is, however, a great divergence between the statements of its adherents and opponents. One calls the founder of the sect as the 'Saint of Light' while the other nicknames him as the 'Saint

1. *'Aitaqād Nāmah* (Mss.)
2. The writings of the Zikrīs, such as, *Zikr-i-Tauhīd, I am a Zikrī, Tafsīr Zikr Allah* and other works cited in the text may be seen for details. District Gazetteer of Baluchistān (p. 116) brings out the differences between their beliefs and those of the Sunnites.
3. See the article by Maulānā 'Abdul Haq, Principal Dārul 'Uloom, Turbat, Baluchistān, appearing in the *Al-Haq*' (1979 issue) and another article giving detailed account of the Zikri faith in Januray, 1980 issue of the *Al-Haq*.
4. Taking into account the extraordinary popularity of the sufis during that period, certain writers have expressed the view that the movement was started to organise the Pathāns under a religious garb in order to fight the Mughals and recapture the lost glory of the Afghāns.

of Darkness'. The founder of the sect was one Bā Yazīd Anṣārī, also known as Pīr Roshan (*i. e.*, the Saint of Light), and his father's name was 'Abdullah. Born at Jālandhar in 931/1524 (that is, a year before Bābur established his rule in India), he remained neglected throughout his youthful years owing to family dissensions, and thus he could not complete his education. In one of his travels, as reported by some, he met one Sulaimān Ismā'īli and spent sometime with the Hindu yogis. As his biographers relate he began to have visions in sleep and heard celestial voices. He engaged himself in *Zikr Khafī* (silent remembrances) and after sometime was lost in repeating the *Ism-i-'Āzam* (the Exalted name of God). When he completed forty years of age he heard a mysterious voice telling him to give up the ritual purity demanded by the *shari'ah* and to perform the prayers like the prophets of God instead of the usual prayers of the Muslims.[1] Thereafter he started to look down others as polytheists and hypocrites. He also began spending his time in devotions extending to forty days' solitary seclusion. It was then that he was commanded to preach openly. It is also alleged that he laid a claim to being Mahdī or the promised Messiah who received revelations from God.[2] The number of his followers increased gradually and he appointed some of them as his deputies in order to preach his tenets.

The doctrines that Shaikh Bā Yazīd has himself mentioned in the *Sirāt-ut-Tauhīd* seem to be the outcome of an excessive reliance on mysticism as well as his own self-complacency which are not unoften found in those who want to go ahead with vigils and devotions on the path of spiritual flight unaided by an experienced guide but have little knowledge of the Qur'ān and the

1. But Shaikh Bā Yazīd has written in the *Maqṣood ul-Mūminīn* that the *shari'ah* is like the bark of a tree without which the tree would not last. *(Maqṣood ul-Mūminīn*, p. 444. Punjab University MSS.
2. Shaikh Bā Yazīd has, however, denied that he was Mahdī. His denial appears in the verbal contest between him and Qāzī Khān of Kābul. *(Ibid)*.

sunnah. The book also contains certain other dogmas and directions which are more probably his regulations for waging war, perhaps, formulated during the period when he was leading an armed conflict against the Mughals and his rival Afghān tribes.

A number of Afghān tribes around Peshāwar joined the Shaikh as his followers. He started preaching his doctrines to the Mahmand tribe and thereafter he gained adherents among the Baluchis and Sindhis. He was stoutly opposed by the scholars and mystics of other schools yet his success in extending his sphere of influence was phenomenal. Shaikh Bā Yazīd deputed emissaries and missionaries to the neighbouring lands and their nobles and rulers, and one even called upon Akbar also. He spent two and a half years fighting the Mughals and, at last, died at Kālā Pāni in 980/1572. He was buried in Hashtnagar. Three of his works, the *Khair ul-Bayān*, *Maqsood ul-Mūminīn* and *Sirāt-ut-Tauhid* are still extant which give the creed and dogmas of his sect. The *Khair ul-Bayān* and *Maqsood ul-Mūminīn* were regarded by his followers as something like the sacred texts. Ākhund Darwīzah, a disciple of Saiyid 'Ali Tirmizi *alias* Pīr Bābā (d. 991/1583), was the chief adversary of Shaikh Bā Yazīd. He wrote the *Makhzan ul-Islām* to refute the teachings of Shaikh Bā Yazīd Ansārī. The Shaikh also wrote an autobiography under the title of the *Hāl Nāmah Pir Dastagīr* which has been compiled with certain additions by 'Ali Muhammad Mukhlis. Broken by continuous internal dissensions and armed conflict with their opponents as well as relentless opposition of the religious scholars, the followers of Roshanā'iyah sect were scattered in different parts of India. Their numbers gradually decreased and ultimately the sect disappeared in India.[1]

Mirzā Naṣr ullah Khān Fidāī Daulat Yār Jang, author of the *Dastān Turktāzān-i-Hind* writes about the Roshanā'iyah sect:

1. *See* the article on Roshanā'iyah by Dr. Muhammad Shaf'ī in *Dairatul Ma'ārif Islamiyah* (Urdu), Vol. IV.

"Roshnā'ī was the name given to the sect founded by a man belonging to India whose name was Bā Yazīd. He laid a claim to prophethood among the Afghāns, assuming the title of *Paighambar-i-Roshnā'ī* or the Enlightened Prophet, and enlisted some of them as his followers who gave up paying homage to the divine revelations and praying to God. His statements and observations indicate that he had given his faith to the doctrine of *Wahdat-ul-Wujud*.[1] He believed that nothing exists save the Necessarily Existant One. He paid tribute to the Prophet of Islam (on whom be peace and blessings of God) and prophesised that the day was not far away when the entire world would acknowledge his prophethood.

"The *Hālnāmah* written by Bā Yazīd shows that he was a recipient of revelations which were brought to him by Gabriel; God had honoured him with apostleship; and he regarded himself to be a prophet. He offered prayers but did not consider it necessary to do so facing the *qiblah*. He invoked the Quranic verse, *Whichever way ye turn is the face of God*, in his support. He did not consider it necessary to take a bath with water and regarded the killing of his adversaries as permissible."[2]

The author of the *Dastān Turktāzān-i-Hind* has also cited certain utterances of Bā Yazīd. Some of these being gnostic reflections are not reproachful but there are still others plainly un-Islamic and reprehensible. He writes:

"He attached the greatest importance to self-reliance and God-awareness. If he found a Hindu with a greater sense of self-reliance, he preferred him over a Muslim. He levied *jizyah* on the Muslims along with *khums* or one-fifth of the property as a tax which was assigned to the public treasury

1. There was nothing novel in it at least in those days for a majority of Indian mystics had faith in this doctrine.
2. pp. 304-305

for being spent on the poor and the needy. All of his sons abstained from sins and profanity and cruelty. He had written several books in Arabic, Persian, Hindi and Pashtu. One of his works entitled *Khair-ul-Bayān* was in all the four languages and was, as he believed, a sacred scripture containing direct divine revelations to him."[1]

Events reported by the contemporary historians show that Shaikh Bā Yazīd had collected a considerable force of the Afghāns and operating from his centre in the Sulaimān hills, he had captured the Khaibar Pass. He also started raiding the surrounding country. Akbar despatched an expedition to crush the rebellion but it did not succeed in achieving its objective. After Bā Yazīd's death, his sons continued to pose danger to the Mughal empire. Rājā Mān Singh, Birbal and Zain Khān, all failed to humble the Roshnā'iyahs and Bīrbal was even killed in an encounter with them. Mān Singh, too, failed to crush the Roshnā'iyahs in an offensive launched by him in 995/1587. The insurgence of the sect was finally suppressed during the reign of Shāh Jahān in 1058/1648.

Mahdawis

At this period the greatest unrest was caused by the Mahdawī movement whose founder, Saiyid Muhammad b. Yūsuf of Jaunpūr (born in 847/1443), had died in the beginning of the tenth century (910/1504) but its aftereffects were visible until the close of that century. A dispassionate study of the history of this movement is sure to convince any one that no religious movement of the time had shaken the Muslim society of the Indian sub-continent, including Afghānistān, so deeply and comprehensively as did the Mahdawī thought for two or three hundred years after its inception. Contemporaneous writings and accounts left by the writers and historians of the later times, both for and against

1. Cited by Mullā Muhsin Khānī, *Hālnāmah Bā Yazid Dar Bustān-i-Mazāhib*, pp. 306—309

this movement, lead to the conclusion that:

(1) Saiyid Muhammad of Jaunpūr was one of those who are born with an inner strength of spirit and fire of a genius after a long time. From his youthful days he was courageous and brave, dissatisfied with the shape of things around him and being rigidly puritan he was ever willing to admonish any one whom he found doing an act which he regarded as unlawful or irreligious. He was honoured, at that time, with the title of *Asad al-'ulamā'* i.e., the lion among the scholars. He was guided in his spiritual edification by Shaikh Dāniāl[1], and took to vigils and devotions in the solitude of hills for a fairly long time. The spiritual exercises if undertaken by a novice unattended by a guide, often lead to misinterpretation of mystic symbols and mental images. A traveller of spirit who has not attained the place of nearness and discernment is always liable to misunderstand a word or symbol and this is what appears to have happened with Saiyid Muhammad. Thus, he declared himself to be the promised Mahdī in one of his journeys and later on called upon the people to give their faith to his claim.

(2) His litanies coupled with inner spiritual strength and the zeal to command the right and forbid the impermissible had given him a charisma that enabled him to influence and inspire his audience. No matter whether one was a commoner or a king, one became so spellbound by his sermons that one willingly left the hearth and home, riches and position at his bidding. People accompanied him to become his disciples or placed themselves entirely at his disposal. This was what happened with Ghiyāth-ud-dīn Khiljī at his capital in Māndū and with the ruler of Gujarāt, Mahmūd Shāh at Jāpānīr. At Ahmadnager, Ahmadābād, Bidar and Gulbarga thousands of persons gave themselves up to him and

1. Unfortunately nothing is to be found about him in the biographical and other Sufi literature.

accompanied him in a procession. During his visit of Sind, he touched the hearts of the people so powerfully that large numbers seemed to be swelled with emotion. His harangu-ings at Qandhār almost caused a trepidation in the whole population and even the governor Mirza Shāh Beg felt attracted to him.

(3) His was a life pure and chaste, of frugal living and abstinence and of complete trust in God—a picture of heavenly severance of all worldly relationships. One could see the same litanies and devotions and the same austerities and selfless sacrifices whether he was in a camp or a canton-ment. Whatever victuals were available, they were distributed equally to all without the least consideration to any one. He would himself accept a share equal to others. This, naturally made an impact upon everyone.

(4). He had several disciples, the promoters of his mission, who were absolutely sincere, fearless and devoted to his cause. Some of them were brave enough to speak the truth to the face of autocrat kings; some endured severe hardships in enforcing the lawful and checking what was unlawful or irreligious; and some even welcomed the gallows for the sake of their mission. Anybody going through their biographies cannot but acknowledge the wholesome in-fluence Saiyid Muhammad Jaunpūrī had exerted on these persons.

To cite an example here, Shaikh 'Ala' b. Hasan of Bayānah also known as Shaikh 'Alā'ī (d. 957/1550) was courageous enough to ask Sultān Salīm Shāh Sūrī to tread the path chalked out by Islam. On arriving in the royal court he saluted the monarch in the usual manner instead of undergoing the elaborate court etiquette. On a second occa-sion when he was tired and sick he risked incurring the displeasure of the king and was scourged. He fell as dead and then his delicate body was tied to the feet of an elephant and trampled to pieces on the streets of the

royal camp.[1]

(5) Saiyid Muhammad's summons for betaking the path of righteousness had five ingredients. These were abstinence from all worldly pleasures and belongings; severance of all connections with the people; migration from one's home; keeping the company of elevated souls; and continuous recollection of God. Saiyid Muhammad also considered the vision of Divine Essence whether in full consciousness or in a dream or in the form of an illumination of the heart as an essential pre-requisite to one's faith.

(6) Saiyid Muhammad, however, gave expression to certain impressions and assumptions, either during ecstatic transports or due to his mistaken interpretation of spiritual symbols and mental images witnessed in his rapturous moods, which turned his followers into a separate sect, distinct and divergent from the rest of the Muslims. Notwithstanding his sincerity and praisworthy zeal for the faith, his teachings were easily exaggerated by his more zealous adherents and formulated in the shape of a creed which ran counter to the beliefs of the majority of *Ahl-Sunnat* Muslims. His followers glorified Saiyid Muhammad to the extent of equating him with the prophets of God; some accorded him a place even higher than the prophets; while the zealots among them extolled him to the level of the holy Prophet of Islam even though they did not deny that the Saiyid was an adherent of Islam and its Prophet. There were others among the followers of Saiyid Muhammad who declared that if anything contrary to the practice of their leader was found in the Qur'ān and the Traditions, it need not be accepted. Similarly, the confidence in the vision of Divine light whether in a dream or in the state of consciousness was magnified to the extent that any

1. *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. IV, and *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. I, p. 524. Maulana Abul Kalām Āzād has in his usual powerful diction narrated the story in a touching manner in the *Tazkirah* (pp. 53-61).

Muslim who was unable to attain that state was declared outside the fold of Islam. The breach between Mahdawīs and the Muslims became wider with the passage of time and, at last, the former assumed the position of a distinct sect, different and separate from the rest of the Muslims. Thus, the very purpose with which its founder had perhaps preached his doctrines eventually came to nothing.

Mahdawīs were able to maintain their power and influence upto the middle of the tenth century, specially in Deccan where they presided over more than one kingdom. The popularity of the cult and its potency is revealed by the events during the reign of Ismā'īl Nizām Shāh (996-998)[1] of Ahmadnagar. When he was raised to the throne as a minor, all power was usurped by Jamāl Khān. Taking the affairs of the state in his hand Jamāl Khān converted the young potentate to his creed and, within a short period, the Mahdawīs from all parts of the country assembled around him. With a force of Mahdawis numbering 10,000 Jamāl Khān established his control over the Nizām Shāhī kingdom and persecuted both the orthodox Sunnīs and the heterodox Shī'as. Burhān Nizām Shāh, on his return to Ahmadnagar in 998/1590, defeated Jamāl Khān and re-established the Shī'ite kingdom.[2]

The Mahdawī movement began to show visible signs of decline by the end of the tenth century. The extravagant claims of its founder and the excesses committed by its fanatical followers had given birth to an unrest in the Indian Muslim society. The learned scholars with an insight in the teachings of the Qur'ān and the way of the Prophet were perturbed by the new schism which was to them nothing short of a foreboding for a new mischief and heresy. The greatest scholar of the age, Muhammad Tāhir of Pattan (913-986)[3], the author of the *Majm'a Bahār ul-Anwār*, declared under an oath that he would not put on his turban until he

1. A.D. 1588-90
2. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, pp. 461-2
3. A.D. 1507-1578

had completely rooted out the false doctrine which had overrun the whole of Gujarāt. When Akbar conquered Gujarāt in 980/1573 and met Muhammad Tāhir, he promised to liquidate the new sect. At the same time he wound the turban on the head of Muhammad Tāhir requesting him to leave the affair of Mahdawīs to him. Akbar appointed Mirza 'Azīz-ud-dīn, his foster brother, to the governorship of Gujarāt during whose time Mahdawīs were subdued but when 'Abdur Rahīm Khān Khānān replaced 'Azīz-ud-dīn as the governor of Gujarāt, the Mahdawīs again managed to regain their influence. Taking off his turban again, Muhammad Tāhir took the way to the capital but the Mahdawīs pursued the scholar and killed him by the time he reached Ujjain.[1]

Causes of Unrest

The annals of the time as well the lesson learnt from experience show that intellectual unrest and mental chaos of the type we have described and aggressive reaction to the existing order of things are usually products of complex factors which are detailed here:—

(1) A marked contradiction between the accepted ideas and practices, the faith and the morals, always gives rise to dissatisfaction and irritation in the minds of persons more thoughtful and sensitive than others. This dichotomy normally takes the shape of a revolutionary call or movement to do away with the apparant disharmony; but, if it is not potent enough to do so, it is overtaken by a scepticism which soon becomes extremist and aggressive and, in a weak and sickly social order, creates even a greater confusion of thought endangering its stability.

The abundance of wealth, hankering after rank and status and the mad rush for laying one's hands on both had, in the tenth century, brought up a class of worldly-minded opportunists who would sacrifice every moral and religious

1. *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. IV

norm to achieve their ends. The class with these inclinations normally comes to the fore in times of peace and prosperity when powerful kingdoms come to have authority over extensive dominions. During the last years of Sūrī dynasty and specially after the establishment of Mughal rule in India, it seems, the social and economic life of the society had produced conditions favourable to the lesser minds hankering after wealth and power. Many well-known injunctions of the *shari'ah* were violated and un-Islamic practices had come into vogue.[1] Hasan Basrī (d. 110/728), the great reformer of the first century, used to call such seekers of power and pelf who were conspicuous during the hay-day of Umayyad and Abbāsid Caliphates, as hypocrites.

(2) When autocratic rulers become the source of all power and authority, their highhandedness, insolent behaviour and open violation of the religious injunctions as well as shameful indulgence in pleasures of flesh normally force the reformers, having courage and sincerity, to launch a revolutionary movement or to take up arms against the rulers.

(3) Conventions and formalities, when taken to the extremes, give rise to intellectual and moral decadence in a society which becomes stagnant in its thought and culture.[2]

1. Some of the details given by the historians as, for example, Saiyid Hāshmī Farīdābādī in the *Tārikh Hind* (Vol. III, p. 40) cite the instances of such un-Islamic practices. During the reign of Sultān Salīm Shāh, who ascended the throne with the title of Islām Shāh, all the officials and nobles used to come together every Friday in the District (Sarkār) headquarters where the shoes of king were placed on a chair under a canopy, before which all those present used to stand and bow their heads in reverence. Thereafter the compilation of royal edicts was read out to all.

2. Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizāmi writes in the *Salātin Dehlī ke Mazhabī Rujhānāt* (p. 451) that the social and moral condition of the Muslims was, on the whole, sinking fast. The fables presented in the literary

(Continued on next page)

The educational system becomes lifeless and unrealistic and loses the capacity to impart satisfaction to the mental quest. It is then that the people find an answer to their searchings in those movements which, rightly or wrongly, dare to go beyond the limited sphere of conventionalism. An important reason or rather an inducement to take this course is the disregard to the teachings of the Scripture and the Prophet. Ignorance of *hadīth* is another cause for it is the surest means for knowing the true spirit of religion in every time and clime as well as the chasm existing between the morals and behaviour of the time and those of the Prophet and his companions.

(4) Absence of a religious leader who is mentally, morally and spiritually superior to others and possesses an attractive personality, who can set at rest the seething minds and hearts and re-strengthen the decaying social order by imparting a new conviction in the abiding nature of Islam and its *shari'ah* as well as in the vast possibilities of progress and development of man through these God-given blessings is yet another reason for fomenting discontentment.

A study of the history, biographies, discourses and other records pertaining to the tenth century shows that the conditions giving rise to intellectual unrest and disquietitude of spirit were far more apparant at the time in India and that is why we find them more pronounced at that time than in the earlier centuries.

(Concluded)

masterpieces of the times—*Afsānā-i-Shāhān* and the *Tārikh Dāwūdi*—domonstrate moral degradation and overcredulous attitude of the people. Riotous living of the friars, self-indulgence of the students, blind faith in charms and amulets, stories of jinn and fairies and Solomon's lamp could never have been so conspicuous in a healthy society with a sound moral grounding. In fact, the Mahdawi movement was but an effort to get rid of that intellectual decadance and religious stagnation.

CHAPTER II

THE GREATEST TUMULT OF THE TENTH CENTURY

Advent of a New Order

The tenth century of the Islamic era had also assumed importance since at the close of it Islam was to complete one thousand years and to enter into a new millennium. Ordinarily there was nothing of significance in this event; just as every new century begins with the expiry of a previous one, the noiseless foot of time was stepping into a new millennium after another thousand years. But, at a time when the minds were seething with restlessness and the beliefs were shaken; the teachings of the Scripture were not only ignored but detested; speculations of the Greek philosophers were taken as the acme of wisdom and intellectual perfection, and lauded as the 'Radiant Skyline' of wisdom; when mountains made out of molehills were regarded as great achievements in the circles of the educated and the pedagogues; prophetic guidance, divine Scriptures, revelations and injunctions of the *shari'ah* were mocked at and reliance on

them was dubbed as ignorance and unsophistication; when the disaffection with the then political system, trying to justify every iniquity and injustice on religious grounds, was about to burst forth in an open revolt; and, to cap it all, when a few ambitious and self-seeking persons, endowed with intelligence and learning, had set their eyes upon improving the occasion by posing as harbingers of a new era like the great founders of religion, then, of course, there could have been no better and well-timed opportunity than the close of Islam's first millennium. These men with vaulting ambition held the advent of Islam as the beginning of the most perfect and successful era in human history and, therefore, its coming to an end with the first millennium offered them a golden opportunity which, once lost, would never have been available to them.

In taking a look at the different parts of Islamic world during the second half of the tenth century we shall have to pay particular attention to Irān, the area inhabited by a people with a restless disposition and creative intellect and which, for reasons more than one, can be called the Greece of the East. For here we find the genesis of the idea that with the approaching end of the first millennium and beginning of the second, the manifestation of a Renovator of Faith promised in the Traditions at the close of every century, must occur in the shape of a great personality: the Promulgator of a new religion rather than a renovator or reformer, who would convert the whole world to his faith. There had, infact, been a few aspiring fellows who had tried to figure in the list of this exalted office. One can only express his disappointment at the chronicles of the time which, like other court annals of the times past, revolve round the kings and emperors, grandees and nobles, and their fastidious tastes and pleasures, but hardly give any details to form an estimate of the thoughts and leanings, emotions, desires and fancies of the common people. If we were to lay our hands on a history of the intellectual thought of those times, it would have told us how the advent of the second millennium had set the hearts of many an

enthusiast on spurs and how several of them had started building castles in the air.

The Safawid dynasty had utilised its power and prestige to firmly establish Shī'aism as the faith of Irān. Shaikh Ṣafī-ud-dīn, the progenitor of those who founded the Safawid dynasty, was a noted mystic, but owing to the little interest Shi'aism had with the spiritual thought and culture known as sufism, the discipline was destroyed once for all notwithstanding the great contribution made by Irān through some of the greatest mystics of their time, such as, Imām Ghazzālī of Tūs, Shaikh Farīd-ud-dīn 'Attār of Nishāpūr, Maulānā Jalāl-ud-dīn Rūmī[1], Maulānā 'Abdul Rahmān Jāmī and others—all of whom had hailed from Irān. The country had also been the source of spreading spiritual light to Baghdād, Delhi and Ajmer through its sons like Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir Jīlānī, Shaikh Shahāb-ud-dīn Suhrawardī, Shaikh Mu'in-ud-dīn Chishtī and Khwājā Qutb-ud-dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī. Irān had also been a great centre of learning for *hadīth* and had produced such talented scholars as Muslim b. al-Hajjāj al-Qushairī of Nishāpūr, Abū 'Isā Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd of Sajistān, Ibn Mājah of Qazwīn and Hāfiz Abū 'Abdur Rahmān Nissā'ī, but it had lost its invaluable patrimony of learning in the fields of Scripture and Prophet's Traditions. Instead, it had directed its attention to the philosophy and logic of the Greeks. Thus, the revolution which had already severed its rapport with the companions of the Prophet and his *sunnah*, had cooled down if not completely numbed Irān's intellectual vigour for upholding the finality of prophethood, and shaken its conviction in the abiding nature of Islam's vitality. Had not Shi'aism based its creed on devotion to the Prophet's household, it would have more probably reverted to the pre-Islamic thoughts and culture of Rustam and Isphandiyār and the creed of Zarathustra.

It was, therefore, not at all an unexpected development that

1. He belonged to Balkh in Khurāsān, an Iranian province; now in Afghanistān.

Irān gave birth, at that time, to a number of anti-Islamic concepts and philosophies. One of these, more developed and logically articulated, was the Nuqtawi movement which, by the way, offers a good example of the restless spirit of Irān which has manifested itself, from time to time, in the shape of Mazdak and Mānī and Hasan b. Sabbāh. The Nuqtawī movement was completely atheistic in its make up, however. Iskandar Munshī writes about the Nuqtawīs:

> "The sect believes, like the philosophers of antiquity, that the universe is eternal and rejects resurrection of human beings and requital on the Day of Judgement. In its estimation the pleasures and sufferings of the worldly life stand for the heaven and hell awarded to a man in return for his good or evil actions.[1]"

Shāh Nawāz Khān, another historian of the time, says:

> "The science of *nuqta*[2] is another name of atheism and infidelity, libertinism and freethinking. Like the philosophers of antiquity, its adherents admit the enternity of the universe and deny requital and the Day of Judgement. The ease and difficulty encountered in the wordly life are taken by them as the reward and punishment for the righteous and wrongful acts".[3]

They accepted the theory of evolution and believed that the inorganic matter and plants blossomed into human beings through a process of growth and gradual development.[4] God had nothing to do, in their opinion, with the growth of vegetables for it was merely the systematic action of the elements and influence of the stars which made them grow.[5] They said that the Qur'ān

1 *Tārikh 'Ālam 'Ārā'i 'Abbāsi*, Vol. II, p. 325

2. Meaning cipher or zero.

3. *Ma'āthir ul-'Umarā*, Vol. II, p. 619

4. *Dabistān-i-Mazāhib*, p. 300

5. *Muballigh ur-Rijāl*, MSS Maulānā Āzād Collection, p. 254, Maulānā Āzād Library, Muslim University, Aligarh.

was the creation of the Prophet while the *shar'iah* was nothing but the expression of formal judgements by the jurists according to their own lights. They made a mockery of prayers, *haj* and sacrifice,[1] and dubbed *Ramadhān* as a month of hunger and thirst. They rediculed the rules pertaining to purification and bathing,[2] and rejected that there were any prohibited degrees for contracting marriages. They discarded the things authoritative and textual but commended rationalism.[3]

The founder of this sect was one Mahmūd of Basākhwān[4]. The sect had thousands of adherents in India and Irān during the tenth century. The Nuqtawīs believed that the 8,000 years since the beginning of the world to the birth of Mahmūd was an era of Arab glory because the prophets of God were born among them alone during all these years.

The leadership of the Arabs, they said, ended with the advant of Maḥmūd[5] and for the next eight thousand years there would be prophets from amongst the Irānians alone.[6]

1. *Muballigh ur-Rijāl*, MSS Maulānā Āzād Collection, p. 25A Maulānā Āzād Library, Muslim University, Aligarh
2. *Ibid*
3. For further details *see* Prof. Mohammdd Aslam's *Dīn Ilāhi aur us:ā Pas Manzar*; Dr. Nazir Ahmad's *Tārikhī wa Adabī Mutāl'e*; and the *Nuqatiyān ya Pusākhwān* by Dr. Sādiq Kiyā.
4. Mahmūd of Basākhwān first summoned the people to his new faith in 800/1398, at Astrābād, and died in 832/1429. Thus, the sect was founded in the beginning of the ninth century and gradually became popular. During the tenth and eleventh centuries it had thousands of adherents in Irān and India. Irānian and other Muslim historians describe them as apostates and believers in transmigration. According to Mahmūd the beginning of everything was the atom of earth, that is, the *nuqtah*. He tried to give a new interpretation to the Quranic verses in the light of his belief in the *nuqtah* or the numericals and ciphers, and that is why the sect is called Nuqtawi or the people of *nuqtah (See* Dr. Nazeer Ahmad's *Tārikhi wa Adabi Mutāl'e)*.
5. A couplet of Mahmūd or one of his followers says:
 For the prodigals who are saved, the turn has come.
 When Arabia railed at Iran, the day will never return.
6. *Dabistān-i-Mazāhib*, p. 301

The convictions of the Nuqtawaīs, described here briefly, had an unusual significance, specially in the context of the reformist movement we are going to discuss; for, it claimed that "Islam having been revoked, everyone had to accept the religion of Mahmūd" and that "Islam having run out its life's duration, a new religion was the need of the time.[1]" The very fact that this doctrine was preached at the time when the end of first millennium was approaching shows that the propagators of this faith intended to intensify their efforts with the start of the second millennium. Shāh 'Abbās Safawī had eliminated thousands of Nuqtawīs charged with heresy; he had taken an attitude more stern than his predecessors for he regarded them as the most dangerous renegades. In 1002/1594 Shāh 'Abbās ordered a general massacre of the Nuqtawīs which forced a large number of them to seek the safety of India. One of them was Hayātī Kāshī who, after serving a term of two years' imprisonment, first went to his home town of Shirāz and thereafter migrated to India in 986/1578. He was reported to be present at Ahmadnagar in 993/1585. Another eminent scholar who occupied an important position among the followers of the sect, was Sharīf 'Āmlī. Distressed by the intolerable conditions in Irān he had also fled to India. Akbar used to render honour to this man as if he was his spiritual mentor. As certain scholars have written, Sharīf 'Āmlī brought proofs from the writings of Mahmūd of Basākhwān to convince Akbar that the time was ripe for him to call the people to his new faith. The writings of Mahmūd he had produced are reported to have predicted that in the year 990/1582 a certain person would eliminate irreligion and establish the true faith.

Both Badāūnī and Khawāja Kalān[2] are in agreement that after his departure from Irān, Sharīf 'Āmlī first sought asylum in the monastery of Maulānā Muhammad Zāhid of a Balkh, a

1. *Dabistān-i-Mazāhib*, p. 300
2. His name was Khwāja 'Ubaid Ullah, and he was the son of Khwāja Bāqī Billāh. He wrote the *Mubligh ur-Rijāl*.

nephew of the great Shaikh Husain of Khwārism, and lived there like a friar. But as he had little of the darvish in him he set on foot abundance of vain talk and senseless blasphemy, so that when Muhammad Zāhid came to know of his beliefs he turned Sharīf 'Āmlī out of his monastery. Thereafter Sharīf 'Āmlī came to Deccan.

Deccan had, in those days, several Shi'ite kingdoms. There he was received with honour for the people took him to be a Shi'a scholar, but when they came to know of his persuasion, they also turned against him. Referring to the incident Badāūnī says that "the rulers of the Deccan wished to cleanse the tablet of existence of his image, but eventually he was set on a donkey and shown about the city in disgrace."[1]

Appointing him as a commander of one thousand, Akbar included Shaikh 'Āmlī among his courtiers. A possessor of the four degrees of the Divine Faith[2] promulgated by Akbar, he was sent as a missionary to Bengal for summoning faithful followers of *Dīn Ilāh* to these degrees of Akbar's faith. He also deputised for the Emperor before the followers of His Majesty's religion.[3] The author of *Ma'āthir-ul-Umarā* says: "he mixed up mysticism and positive facts with heresy and infidelity, subscribed to the doctrine: *Everything is He;* and called everything a God".[4] Abul Fazl 'Allāmī is also reported to have been swayed, according to some of the contemporary historians, by the Nuqtawī movement. When Shāh 'Abbās Safawī got executed Mīr Saiyid Ahmad Kāshī, a prominent leader of the Nuqtawīs, a letter written to him by Abul Fazl was found in his papers. Iskander Munshī, a historian of Abul Fazal's time writes in the

1. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 253
2. The four degrees of Faith, according to Akbar, consisted in one's readiness to sacrifice four things; life, property, religion and honour for the Emperor.
3. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 243
4. *Ma'āthir ul-Umarā'* Vol. III, p.285

Tārikh 'Ālam Ārā'i 'Abbāsī:

"It has been learnt from the people visiting India that Abul Fazl, son of Shaikh Mubārak, one of the scholars of India and a trusted courtier of Akbar, is a follower of this religion. He has made Akbar latitudinarian who has given up the path of *shari'ah*. The letter of Abul Fazl addressed to Mīr Ahmad Kāshī, which was found among the papers of the aforesaid Mīr, testifies that he was a Nuqtawī."[1]

Khawāja Kalān also says while discussing Mahmūd of Basākhwān and his religion in the *Mublligh-ur-Rijāl*, that "Shaikh Abul Fazl of Nāgor imported that destructive doctrine into India."[2]

These documentary evidences sufficiently demonstrate how the Nuqtawīs had conspired to prepare the ground for a new religion to take the place of the old one at the beginning of the second millennium: the new era and the new faith were, it seems, in search of an anointed leader who could preside over the newfound kingdom; and there was none better suited than the Emperor Akbar to fill in that role.

1. Cited from *Tārikhi and Adabi Mutāl'e* by Dr. Nazir Ahmad, p. 261
2. *Mublligh ur-Rijāl*, p.31. For further details also *see* pp. 32-33.

CHAPTER III

AKBAR'S RULE

THE CONTRASTING CLIMAXES

The Religious Period

All the historians of Akbar's reign are in agreement that Akbar began his rule as an orthodox Muslim, or rather with an excess of religious frenzy akin to blind faith. A few incidents related by Mullā 'Abdul Qādir Badāūnī (d. 1004/1595), have been taken from the *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh* to show that Akbar was, like his forefathers, a strict Muslim. With no religious education or, for that matter, any education at all, and living in an age when the excessive veneration of the tombs of saints was a common feature, Akbar used to undertake long journeys for the purpose, punished those who showed disbelief or expressed views contrary to the accepted articles of faith, presented offerings at the shrines of saints, spent a part of the day in recollection of God, kept company of the scholars and saintly persons and attended spiritual concerts.

We do not see any harm in citing Mullā 'Abdul Qādir Badāūnī in support of Akbar's religious zeal. These statements

of Badāūnī, many of which find confirmation in the accounts of Nizām-ud-dīn and Abul Faẓl, have something nice to say about Akbar and no historian has ever criticised them for containing even a veiled reprehension to the king. There was, in fact, no reason for Badāūnī to cry down Akbar's religiosity of the initial period. We shall, however, refrain from invoking Budāūnī's testimony in regard to the later part of Akbar's rule when he was engaged in preaching the *Dīn Ilāhī* and unity of all religions, and insulting the precepts of Islam for demonstrating his catholicity, since the authenticity of Badāūnī's statement about that period have, of late, been challenged by certain historians[1]. Wherever we shall refer to Būdāūnī for the later period of Akbar's rule, we shall do it only when his statement is supported by the assiduous courtiers and historians eager to preserve and extol the dignity of their master.

Now, let us see what *Muntakabut Tawārīkh* has to say about the earlier religious zeal of Akbar:

"The Emperor set out to pay a vow of thanks for the

1. The campaign launched in the recent past to discredit Mullā 'Abdul Qādir Badāūnī's *Muntakhabut Tawārikh* by attrjbuting his statements to orthodoxy and personal prejudices against Akbar cannot be supported on any valid ground. The trend, in fact, shows an emotional attachment to Akbar and a conscious effort to gloss over the faults and errors committed by him. It bespeaks of a negative attitude born of a particular way of thinking and the system of education as well as circumstances which have helped to advance motivated historiography of the present times. Anybody who goes through the *Muntakhabut Tawārīkh* with an unbiased mind cannot but acknowledge the sincerity, truthfulness and courage of its author.

The merit of 'Abdul Qādir Badāūnī lies in the fact that when every other writer was no more than a panegyric of the Emperor, Badāūnī stood apart from all of them. According to Elliot, "rarely do the other obsequious annalists dare to utter their own sentiments, especially such as would be ungrateful to a royal ear, or to confess their own errors and foibles, as 'Abdul Qādir does with so much complacency and indifference." (Vol. V., p. 480)

rising of this star of prosperity (i.e. birth of Prince Salim) and went on foot from Agra to Ajmir, travelling six or seven *coses* each day. After fulfilling the rites of the pilgrimage he returned, and in the blessed month of Ramazān he encamped outside Dehli, and spent some days in visiting the tombs of the saints of God."[1]

"The Emperor had Mirzā Maqim of Isfahān together with a certain person named Mīr Yāqūb of Kashmir put to death on the charge of being *Shi'ahs*."[2]

"The Emperor . . . with a view to visiting the tomb of that Pole-star of Shaikhs . . . honoured Shaikh Farīd . . . went towards Ajodhan, which is generally known as Pattan."[3]

"In the beginning of Sh'abān the Emperor left Dehlī for Ajmir . . . At the beginning of the blessed month of Ramazān he arrived within seven *coses* of Ajmir, and dismounting in his accustomed manner made a pilgrimage to the shrine, and presented a pair of kettle drums of Dāūd's, . . . And daily, according to his custom, held in that sacred shrine by night intercourse with holy, learned, and sincere men, and *seances* for dancing and sufiism took place."[4]

"In the year nine hundred and eighty the buildings of the *'Ibādat-Khānah* were completed...His Majesty spent whole nights in praising God; he continually occupied himself in pronouncing *Yā huw*[5] and *Yā hādī*[6], in which he was well versed."[7]

1. *Muntakhabut Tawrikh*, Vol. II, p. 127-28; also *see Akbar Nāmah*, Vol. III, p. 233
2. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 128
3. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol II, p. 137; also *see Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 362
4. *Muntakhabut Tawārtkh*, Vol. II, p. 188; also see *Akbar Nāmah*, Vol. III, p. 259
5. Meaning; 'O He (God)!
6. Meaning 'O Guide!
7. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, page 203; *Akbar Nāmah*, V p. 364; *Tabaqāt Akbari*, Vol. III, p. 514

"On Fridays after prayers he would go from the new chapel of the Shaikh-ul-Islām, and hold meeting in this building. Shaikhs, 'Ulamā, and pious men, and a few of his own companions and attendants were the only people who were invited.....His Majesty would go from time to time to these various parties, and converse with them, and discuss philosophical subjects."[1]

In the events of the year 986/1578 we read about Akbar's preoccupations at Fatehpur Sikri:

"There he used to spend much time in the *'Ibādat-Khānah* in the company of learned men and Shaikhs. And especially on Friday nights, when he would sit up there the whole night continually occupied in discussing questions of religion, whether fundamental or collateral."[2]

"At the same time His Majesty ordered Qāzī Jalāl-ud-dīn, and several 'Ulamā, to read out the commentary on the Qur'ān."[3]

In the annals of 985/1577, it is stated:

"After performing the pilgrimages at Dehlī to the tombs of the great saints of that illustrious locality, the Emperor went on a hunting expedition in the neighbourhood of Pālam[4]"

Once when Akbar was walking and came near the Madrasah Khair-ul-Manāzil established by Mahum Ankah, a slave name Faulād, whom Mirzā Sharaf-ud-dīn Husain had set free, shot an arrow at him which happily did no more than graze his skin. The providential escape was taken by Akbar as a "supernatural admonition and the miracles of the Pīrs of Dehlī."[5]

Another time while returning after a visit to the mausoleum of Khwāja Muin-ud-dīn Chishtī at Ajmer, Akbar visited Shaikh

1. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol II, pp. 204-205; *Tabaqāt-i-Akbarī*, Vol. II, p. 471
2. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 262
3. *Ibid*, p. 215
4. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 259; *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 507
5. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 60

Nizām Nārnaulī (who was one of the greatest Shaikhs), and "in the fulness of his faith entreated his prayers."[1]

Akbar had a great regard for Shaikh Salim Chishti whose monastery was built by him on the top of the hill at Sikrī. The Shaikh had promised Akbar that his prayers for the blessing of a son would be answered. Accordingly, when Akbar learnt that his Hindu consort, the daughter of Rājā Bihārī Mal of Ambar, was with child she was sent to the Shaikh's monastery at Sikrī, where was born the prince who received the name Salīm in the honour of the Saint.[2]

Another son of Akbar, prince Murād, was also born in the monastery of Shaikh Salim Chishtī.[3]

On the request of Akbar, "prince Salim received the tablet of instruction from the hand of the God-fearing Maulānā Mir Kalān, the traditionist of Herāt...and learnt the lesson 'In the name of the Gracious and Merciful God."[4]

"The Emperor on account of his great reverence for the Shaikh ('Abd-un-Nabī) used to go from time to time to his house to hear lectures on the Traditions of the Prophet, and once or twice he even stood before him without his shoes and made the eldest Prince attend his school to learn the (collection of) 40 *ahādith* by the renowned master Maulānā 'Abdur Rahmān Jāmī."[5]

Mullā 'Abdul Qādīr relates his own experience: "Then the Emperor gave me a pair of splendid Nakhūdī shawls (and said): 'Take these and go and see the Shaikh ('Abd-un-Nabī), and say to him from us: 'They are from our own private treasury, and we had them made on purpose for you, do you wear them."[6]

1. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 108; *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 350
2. *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh*, Vol. II, pp, 112, 124; *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari* vol. II, p. 356-7.
3. *Muntakhabut-Tawarikh*, Vol. II, pp. 135-6; *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari* p. 360
4. *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh*, Vol. II p. 173
5. *Ibid*, p. 206-7
6. *Ibid*, p. 243-4

Shaikh Muhammad Ghauth of Gwālior was one of the renowned mystics of Shattārī order. He was granted a *jāgīr* which yielded an annual income of a million sterling.[1] Akbar sent for his son, Shaikh Ziā Ullah and assembled a party in his honour at the *'Ibādat-Khānah*, every Thursday evening in which he invited Sayyids, Shaikhs, 'Ulamā and Amīrs.[2]

The homage rendered by Akbar to the pious and heavenly-minded persons was after the custom of his Timurid forefathers who were all devoted to Khwājā Nasīr-ud-dīn 'Ubaid Ullah Ahrār. Sultān Abū Sa'eed, the grandfather of Bābur used to go bare footed for paying his respect to the Khawājā and never did anything without consulting him. Bābur's father 'Umar Shaikh Mirzā also held the Khwājā in reverence. Bābur has paid glowing tributes to him in his Memoirs. Several women of the royal family were given in marriage to the mystic Shaikhs of Naqshbandiyah order. When Khwājā Yahyā, who was one of the descendants of Khwājā 'Ubaid Ullah Ahrār came to India, Akbar received him with the greatest honour and bestowed a *jāgir* for his maintenance. "He was made 'leader of the pilgrimage' and was sent on his way to the holy places with ample stores for the journey. When he had attained the felicity of completing the pilgrimage he returned, and passed his precious time in Agra."[3]

Akbar had appointed seven persons to lead the congregational prayers, one for the five prayers of each day of the week[4].

Akbar used to send at his cost a large number of persons for performing pilgrimage every year. Sometimes a general order was issued that any one who wished might go at his expense.[5] Narrating an event of the kind, Bādaunī says, "Sultān

1. *Munakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. III, p. 29
2. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 204; *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 235,
3. *Muntakhabut-Tawarikh*, Vol. III, p. 151; *Akbar Nāmah*, Vol. III, p. 382-3.
4. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p.232
5. *Muntakhabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 258; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 517.

Khwājah son of Khwājah Khāwand Mahmūd, he appointed *Mīr Hājī*[1], and sent a sum of six lacs of rupees, in money and goods, to be distributed among the deserving people of Makkah and Madīnah, and for building a *Khānkāh*[2] in the sacred precincts. When the Emperor dismissed Sultān Khwājah on his road to the two sacred cities, he himself, with bare head and feet, and dressed in the *Ihrām*,[3] and in every respect clothed like a pilgrim and having shorn his head a little, went a little distance in his train. At this a cry broke forth from the multitude, and he showed himself moved by their devotion".[4]

When Shāh Abū Turāb, sent by Akbar as a leader of the pilgrims, returned from Hijāz with a stone with the impression of the foot of the Prophet on it, "the Emperor went a distance of four *coses* to meet it, and commanded the Amirs to carry it by turns a few step, and in this manner they brought it to the city".[5]

The accounts of early religiosity of Akbar find confirmation in the statement of another renowned historian of the Moghul period, Mir 'Abdur Razzāq Khafi Khān, also known as Ṣamṣam-ud-daulah Shahnawāz Khan (1111-1171 A.H.)[6] which would be a fitting epilouge to this description. Khafi Khān writes in the *Ma'āthir-ul-Umarā'*.

> "Emperor Akbar used to exert himself in promulgating the injunctions of the *shari'ah*, enforcing the acts commendable and preventing those impermissible. Often he gave the call to prayers and led the congregation and even swept the mosque for merit's sake."[7]

1. Leader of pilgrims.
2. A rest house
3. Dress worn by the pilgrims
4. *Muntakhabat Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p.246
5. *Muntakhabat Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 320; *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 558
6. A.D. 1699-1758
7. *Ma'āthir-ul-Umarā*,' Vol. II, p. 651

The Second Phase of Akbar's Rule

Akbar's pietism[1] illustrated by the instances cited here breathes of a devoutness of the common herd, grounded not in the study of the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*, nor in its deep knowledge acquired through keeping company of the scholars and righteous persons, but shows the overreligiousness of a rustic soldier to which any illiterate person living in the ninth century Central Asia would have become accustomed by force of circumstances and his contact with ignorant nobles and war-lords of the period. It was indeed a credulous faith bordering on superstitious trust in the saints and the merit in paying visits to their shrines; sometimes covering long distances on foot, and rendering reverential honour to the descendants of the saints or keepers of their shrines who seldom possessed any learning or spirituality like their illustrious ancestors. His religiosity was displayed through sweeping the monasteries, taking part in the musical recitations of devotional poetry and paying homage to the worldly-minded mystics and scholars who had attached themselves to his court. 'It is a common knowledge that Akbar was illiterate.[2]

1 In the account of Akbar's death, given by Jahāngīr in the *Tūzuk Jahāngīri* (the first part was written by Jahāngīr himself) it is stated that in his last moments Akbar had realised his mistake and died after reciting the *Kalematus Shahādat* or the words of testimony. *Sūrah Yāsin* of the Qur'ān was being recited at the time by his bedside. We are, however, not concerned how he made his last journey and in what state he met the Lord for our study relates to his efforts in promulgating his new faith and the effects it had on Islam and the Muslims.

2. When according to custom the age of Akbar had reached four years, four months and four days he was given in the tutorship of Mullāzādah 'Esām-ud-dīn Ibrāhīm but the Mullāzādah did not take long to realise that the Prince had no inclination towards his studies. However, it was taken as lack of attention and interest on the part of the Mullāzādah and another tutor, Maulānā Bā Yazīd, was appoin-

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The Timurids were generally extremists and overreligious, volatile, thoughtless and unsteady. Akbar's father Humāyūn is stated to be a gallant and great fighter who seemed to be a man made of steel in the battlefield, but after a moment of success he would busy himslef in merry-making and dream among the precious hours in the opium eaters' paradise. Jahāngīr, too, had the same weakness of disproportion and contradiction in his character.

We should also not forget the extraordinary conditions in which Akbar had spent his childhood. The treachery of his uncles, defeats suffered by his father and the bitter experiences during his journey to Irān and, finally, the behaviour of his benefactor Bairam Khān had given him a sceptical frame of mind questioning the sincerity of his well-wishers and the soundness of every truth and fact.

Effect of Religious Discussions

Had Akbar been aware of his limitations as an illiterate person and realised that all his interests and ambitions lay in the affairs of the world: in being a better administrator and in consolidation of his empire; he would have not only overcome his weaknesses, just mentioned, but also saved his soul and acted like many other Muslim kings and emperors, as some had been in his own family, and proved himself an exalted Protector of the Faith. But the self-realisation of his weakness was not the virtue to be found in Akbar just as the drawback of illiteracy was not the failing of any other Timurid prince from Bābur to Bahādur Shāh. Akbar was great as a general and unsurpassed

(Concluded)

ted in his place but the Prince still showed no inclination to take his studies seriously. The subsequent unsettled political conditions and Humāyūn's wanderings did not allow Akbar to receive any education and thus he remained unacquainted with the arts of reading and writing (Elliot, Vol. V, p. 223).

as an administrator. He should not have delved into religious affairs and should have better left these matters, like a good Muslim and a good soldier to the doctors of religion and those competent to handle them as was done by Bābur and Humāyūn (although both were well-versed in literature and had a refind taste). He ought to have kept himself aloof from the delicate doctrinal matters of faith and metaphysical issues, scholastic intricacies and the tangled question of comparative religions. This was the domain where the slightest mistake or inexperience can cause one to go on a wrong track leading to eternal ignominy. He intruded in a field of which he had the least knowledge, and, what is more, his action ran counter to the political interests of a dynasty that was to hold the charge of an important part of the Muslim world for four hundred years. Mistake of a similar nature, of meddling with doctrinal and scholastical issues and employing the State's power and influence in his favour, was committed earlier by a much more learned and intelligent king like Caliph Māmūn al-Rashīd (170-218 AH)[1] but that had neither proved profitable to him nor to any body else.[2]

But Akbar was ambitious and imaginative, and had an inquisitive disposition. His uninterrupted victories in the battle-fields and series of successful diplomatic manoeuvres had led him to labour under the misconception that he could solve the mysteries of mute reality, faith and creed in the same manner as he dealt with the administrative and political problems.

And, to make the matter still worse, there were crafty self-sellers of his court who arranged the wranglings and verbal contests to take the place of customary cock and bull fights, the normal amusement of eastern rulers and potentates, partly for showing off their intellectual grit and partly for the recreation of their master who seemed to enjoy these passage of words. These contests held in the 'Hall of Worship' were miscalled religious

1. A.D. 787-833
2. For details see *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, Part I, pp.78-86

discussions and enquiries in different faiths. It is a brutal fact, perhaps experienced times without number in the history of religions, that unless one attending such polemical disputations is endowed with a keen intellect and deep knowledge of the subject, and is also blessed with a divine grace, one is more likely to fall a prey to scepticism and sophism and end up as an atheist or a neo-Platonist.

Jahāngīr's evidence about Akbar shows that he had fallen into a state of religious mania. He writes in his *Tūzuk :*

> "My father always associated with the learned of every creed and religion, especially Pandits and the learned of India, and although he was illiterate, so much became clear to him through constant intercourse with the learned and wise, in his conversation with them, that no one knew him to be illiterate, and he was so acquainted with the niceties of verse and prose compositions that his deficiencey was not thought of".[1]

Akbar was not content to limit his quest to Islam and Hinduism and other religions of India ; he invited even European scholars to get himself acquainted with Christianity. Abul Fazl acknowledges that arrangements were made to translate the Pentateuch, the Gospels and the Psalms and to convey these to the Emperor. An embassy was sent in the person of Saiyid Muzaffar to certain Christian kings to whom a letter was sent, saying :

> "In our spare time we meet the scholars of all the religions and derive benefit from their sublime thoughts and useful conversation. Differences of tongue stand in our way, so kindly send a man for our pleasure, who may be able to convey the noble concepts in an intelligible manner. It has been brought to our notice that the revealed books, such as the Pentateuch, the Gospels and the Psalms, have been translated into Arabic and Persian. Should these books,

1. *Tūzuk Jahāngīri*, p. 33

which are profitable to all, whether translated or not, be procurable in your country, send them. We are deputing honourable Saiyid Muzaffar, a recipient of our favours, for obtaining a few copies of these translations in order to strengthen our friendship and the bases of unity. He will have conversation with you and correspond with you".[1]

Translations of Christian scriptures were produced before the Emperor and a few missionaries also called upon him personally to explain the doctrines of the Trinity and the truth of Christinity. Badāūnī writes describing the mission of these Church Fathers:

"Learned monks also from Europe, who are called *pādre*, and have an infallible head, called Pāpā (Pope)... brought the Gospel, and advanced proofs for the Trinity."[2]

Akbar had been so crazy about it that in a letter to the fathers of the Christian Society at Goa he wrote:

"Your reverences will be able immediately, on receiving my letter to send some of them to my Court with all confidence, so that in disputations with my doctors I may compare their several learning and character, and see the superiority of the Fathers over my doctors, whom we call Qāzī, and whom by this means they can teach the truth."[3]

Victory in polemical disputations does not depend, as the experience shows, either on the truth of any religion or even the cogent arguments and intrinsic evidences, but on the gift of the gab possessed by a contender. It is not unoften that propounders of a weak doctrine wins the sympathies of the audience by his eloquence and playing upon the sentiments of the listeners. On the other hand, the advocate of a religion far more virtuous and truthful is likely to lose the war of words if he lacks these qualities. It is also doubtful if the scholars representing Islam in the court of Akbar had adequate knowledge of Christianity and

1. *Inshā'-i-Abul Fazl*, p. 39
2. *Muntakabut Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 267
3. Cited from Dr. Ishwari Prassad, *The Mughal Empire*, p. 375

its weaknesses or were even qualified to defend Islam as a rational and practical religion against the onslaughts of Christian missionaries. In fact, Christianity was in those days a new religion in India with a few adherents, mostly foreigners, and so the Muslim religious scholars had never taken it seriously enough to study its doctrines, while the Portuguese, who had sent the missionaries, had already set up a College of Jesuit Mission at Goa for the purpose of theological study and propagation of Christianity in India.[1] There was nothing strange, if in these circumstances, the Catholic missionaries had made a favourable impression upon Akbar who might have considered them intellectually superior to the Muslim religious scholars. Be it as it may, the outcome of these controversial wranglings was not different from what one might have expected and as confirmed by Badāūnī: "And persons of novel and whimsical opinions, in accordance with their pernicious ideas, and vain doubts, coming out of ambush decked the false in the garb of the true, and wrong in the dress of right, and cast the Emperor, who was possessed of an excellent disposition, and was an earnest searcher after truth, but very ignorant and a mere tyro, and used to the company of infidels and base persons, into perplexity, till doubt was heaped upon doubt, and he lost all definite aim, and the straight wall of the clear Law, and of firm religion was broken down, so that after five or six years not a trace of Islam was left in him; and everything was turned topsy turvy"[2]

At another place Badāūnī says: "In the same way every command and doctrine of Islam, whether special or general, as the prophetship, the harmony of Islam with reason, the doctrine of *rūyat*,[3] *taklīf*[4] and *takwīn*[5], the details of the day of resurrection

1. *Akbar Nāmah*, Vol. III, p. 1027; *Commentarius*, I, p. 34
2. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, pp. 262-263
3. Vision of God in the Hereafter.
4. Moral responsibility of human beings.
5. Creation of the Universe.

and judgement, all were doubted and rediculed"[1].

To cap it all, the subtle and delicate points of Quranic exegesis and history of the earliest period of Islam were brought into discussion, in the illiterate Emperor's court permeated with a playful and hilarious atmosphere. As Badāūni says, "His Majesty ordered Qāzi Jalāl-ud-dīn and several 'Ulamā to read out the commentary[2] on the Qur'ān, but this led to great dissentions among them. Deep Chand Rājah Manjholah—that fool!—once set the whole court in laughter by saying that Allah after all had great respect for cows, else the cow would not have been mentioned in the first chapter of the Qur'ān. His Majesty had also the early history of Islam read out to him, and soon began to think less of the *sahābah*[3]. Soon after, the observance of the five prayers, and the fasts, and the belief in everything connected with the Prophet, were put down to vain superstitions, and man's reason, not tradition, was acknowledged as the only basis of religion. Portuguese priests also came frequently; and His Majesty accepted[4] certain articles of their belief based upon reason"[5].

Role of Religious Scholars

The doctors of religion had a decisive role to play in helping Akbar to keep to the right path as well as to avoid the pitfalls natural to a ruler of headstrong disposition but with little sense of proportion. But the scholars needed for it had to have profound knowledge of religious wisdom and were to be possessed of sagacity and judiciousness. They had to keep their eyes more on fundamentals than on the details, on the objectives than on the means, and were to be cognizant of the need to fraternize with

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*,, Vol. II, p. 317
2. W. H. Lowe's rendering "to write a commentary" is incorrect.
3. Companions of the Prophet.
4. Lowe's version says "enquried into", which is not correct a translation of *giraftand*.
5. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, p. 215

others instead of alienating them. They had also to be virtuous and selfless, pious and above worldly temptations, and to understand the fact that the kingdom, having a hold on an overwhelming non-Muslim majority, still conscious of its identity and the loss of its power, could not last without winning their cooperation. These scholars had also to understand that the great kingdom they had the opportunity to serve was the second largest power after the Ottoman Caliphate of Turkey by virtue of its resources, manpower and extensiveness of its dominions, and that the greatest need of the time, virtually an act of worship, was to guard that empire against all dangers. They had to help the ruler in his onerous task of strengthening that empire and, at the same time, making it a citadel of Islam.

The Emperor required, on the other hand, courtiers and counsellors who had a strong conviction in the faith of the founder of that empire, who, in 933/1527, had won the battle against Rānā Sāngā after making a pledge to serve the cause of God.[1] These persons, too, had not only to possess moral grit but also an awareness of the need to keep themselves aloof from all those irreligious and atheistic thoughts and movements, prevalent in the tenth century Irān and India, whose aim was to promote mental confusion and political anarchy. They had to devote themselves to the great task of providing a clean administration, integrating the society and the administrative apparatus, and to work for social and moral uplift of the people.

Had Akbar been fortunate to enlist the support of the enlightened and the sincere among these two elements of his empire, his kingdom would have undoubtedly played the same role in the service of Islam as was done by the Ottomans in the West. Iqbal had very correctly remarked that "The Timurīd Turks were not a bit inferior to the Othmānī Turks".

But it was a misfortune of Akbar that with all his glory and

1. See *Tārikh-i-Firishtā* by Muhammad Qāsim Firishtā; *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 37

grandeur none of his courtiers belonging to these two groups were gifted with the instinct and genius required of them. Many of them rather performed the regrettable task of not only alienating him from religion but even helped him to join his fortunes with anti-Islamic thoughts and movements.

Religious Scholars of Akbar's Court

Let us first take the doctors of religion attached to the imperial court. Akbar paid greatest marks of respect to them during the initial period of his rule; they were first to be promoted as his counsellors. He showed absolute confidence in them but they proved to be a lot which, according to a great savant and critic Shaikh 'Abdullāh b. Mubārak, oftentimes happen to prove as one of the three important causes of promoting irreligion. He says: "Who else have mutilated religion save the kings, insincere scholars and earthly-minded pietists?"

We are again referring here to the testimony of Badāunī for he was an eye-witness to the actions of his fellow courtiers and also, because, there is no evidence to show that he bore any grudge against the religious scholars which might discredit his testimony. Depicting a picture of the Akbar's court he writes:

> "He (Akbar) assembled a party in his (Sheikh Zia Ullah's) honour at the *Ibādat-Khānah*, and every Thursday evening he invited the Saiyids, Shaikhs, 'Ulmā and Amirs. But ill-feeling arose in the company about the seats and order of precedence, so His Majesty ordered that the Amīrs should sit on the east side, the Saiyids on the west, the 'Ulamā on the south, and the Shaikhs on the north. His Majesty would go from time to time to these various parties, and converse with them, and discuss philosphical subjects."[1]

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh*, Vol. II, pp. 204-5

Badāūnī further relates that 'all at once one night the vein of the neck of the 'Ulamā of the age swelled up, and a horrid noise and confusion ensued. His Majesty got very angry at their rude behaviour,'[1] and he took their behaviour as impertinence.

Akbar got very angry at their unmannerliness and said to Badāūnī, "In future report any of the 'Ulamā who talk nonsense and cannot behave themselves, and I shall make him leave the hall."[2]

One of the learned scholars in Akbar's entourage was Mullā 'Abdullah of Sultānpūr.[3] He was supposed to be 'the infallible guide and expositor' of the faith and had been conferred the title of Makhdūm-ul-Mulk. He had given a *fatwā*[4] that the ordinance of pilgrimage to Mecca was no longer binding, perhaps, for the reason that he might not himself be called upon to perform the pilgrimage. He had also invented a device for avoiding payment of the legal alms (*zakāt*) due upon his wealth[5]. He had made such a pile of wealth during Akbar's time that several boxes filled with gold bricks were later unearthed from his ancestral cemetery where they had been buried under the pretext of dead relations.[6]

Another scholar enjoying patronage of Akbar, next only to Makhdūm-ul-Mulk, was Maulānā 'Abdun Nabī.[7] He held the

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, p. 205
2. *Ibid.*, p. 205
3. A district in the Indian Punjab. For further details of Mulla 'Abdullah see *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. V.
4. Authoritative juristic opinion in accordance with the Islamic Law.
5. Towards the end of each year he used to make over all his property to his wife, but before the year had run out he took it back again. Under the Islamic law the poor-due or legal alms become due on possession of surplus stock for a whole year, so he absolved himself of this responsibility in this manner.
6. According to one report the gold bricks worth thirty million rupees were unearthed from the cemetery.
7. Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī was son of Shaikh Ahmad Gangoh and grandson

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office of Sadr-us-Sadūr, the Chief Justice of the kingdom and was believed to be one of the ablest religious doctors of his time and an authority on the Traditions. The reports about him in the *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, however, show that he was just a half-learned person who could not even pronounce Arabic words correctly.[1] On occasions Akbar even stood before him without his shoes and the nobles and scholars had to wait for hours in order to pay a visit to him. He was given the charge of disbursement of large sums of money and tax-free lands for religious and charitable purposes. According to one report he surpassed his predecessors in magnanimity and open-handed charity. But the historian Badāūnī, a colleague and friend of 'Abdun Nabī, reports that he was rapacious and unworthy, lacked good manners of the 'Ulamā and of his own illustrious forefathers and was sometimes even rude and scant of courtesy. May be that he became arrogant and inconsiderate because of his office and authority but it is true that he did not leave a good impression of his behaviour either on the Emperor or on other nobles of the court. 'Abdul Qādir Badāūnī accuses him of misusing his authority. He writes: "For this reason a large number of worthy people from the extreme east of India and as far west as Bakkar (on the Indus) came to Court. If any of them had a powerful protector in one of the Amīrs, or near friends of His Majesty, he could manage to get his affairs settled; but such as were destitute of such recommendations had to bribe Sayyid 'Abd-ur-Rasūl, the Shaikh's head-man, or make presents to

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of Shāh 'Abdul Qaddūs (d. 1537 A.D.). Having received education from certain scholars of Arabia, he had differences with his father who believed in the Unity of Being and the legality of musical recitations. Further details about him can be seen in the *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. V.

1. It is difficult to believe Badāūnī's report that he misspelt even common words of Arabic for he had received education from Shahāb-ud-dīn Ahmad b. Hajr Haytamī of Mecca who was a great scholar and author.

his chamberlains, door-keepers and sweepers, in order to get their blanket out of the mire."[1]

Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī's orthodoxy was beyond question. Sometimes he was so impolite as to cast to winds the adroitness required in dealing with the persons and circumstances. "Once, on the occasion of Akbar's birthday the nobles and grandees were paying their respect to the Emperor," writes the auther of the *Ma'āthir-ul-Umrā*, who had put on a saffron-coloured garment. The Shaikh raised objection to the colour of Emperor's dress and bade him to take it off, but he did it in such a way that the staff in his hand touched the head of the Emperor. This gave great offence to Akbar, but he kept quiet and complained to his mother about the behaviour of the Shaikh. His mother, belonging to a saintly family, mellowed his anger by saying that the incident would get a place in history which would record that a doctor of religion who was a subject to the Emperor hit him with his staff but the Emperor kept quiet for his deference to the *shari'ah*."[2]

The two principal leaders of the 'Ulamā, Makhdūm-ul-Mulk and Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī, quarrelled among themselves and became contenders of one another. 'Abdun Nabī decried Makhdūm-ul-Mulk and Makhdūm-ul-mulk denounced 'Abdun Nabī as an apostate while their followers arrayed themselves behind their leaders as two different camps at loggerheads. If the historians have made a correct assessment of the character of these two persons, there hardly remains any doubt that none of the two was possessed of the learning and piety or even graciousness required of a doctor of religion to represent his faith during a period so crucial as the reign of Akbar. If advisors with the talents, learning and piety of Rajā' b. Haiwah[3] and Qāzi Abū

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh*, Vol. II, pp. 207-8
2. *Ma'āthir ul-Umrā*, Vol. II, p. 561
3. A Minister of Caliph Sulaimān b. 'Abdul Malik

Yūsuf[1] were not to be had at the time, Akbar deserved counsellors of at least 'Abdul 'Azīz Āsif Khān and Qāzī Shaikh-ul-Islām's calibre. Akbar had drawn to his court some of the most intelligent scholars of seculars sciences, adept in literature and penmanship. Religious scholars gifted with greater talents and intelligence were required to outshine these men of letters.

Akbar, according to 'Abdul Qādir Badāūnī, rated Makhdūm-ul-Mulk and 'Abdun Nabī and some other scholars of his time, as unmatched even by Rāzī and Ghazzālī but when he witnessed their stinginess and unbecoming conduct he discarded the 'Ulamā altogether.

Courtiers and Counsellors

Akbar was as much unfortunate in having self-seeking advisors and councellors as he was in the case of religious scholars. Being an unlettered man, every fluent chatterer, especially if he happened to come from Irān, then looked upon as the Greece of the East by every Indian and Afghān, could put him in a trance. At the time when he was losing his faith in Islam, there came to his court from Irān the three brothers, Hakīm Abul Fath Gilānī, Humāyūn[2] and Hakīm Nūr-ūd-dīn Qarārī, and all the three were conferred rank and dignity. Shortly thereafter Mullā Yazdī arrived in India with a vituperative tongue against the Prophet's companions. Hakīm Abul Fath went a step further and publicly denied the truth of religion and everything taught by it like revelation, prophethood and miracles.[3] This was the time when Sharīf Āmlī, who had fled from Irān, arrived at the court of Akbar. As stated earlier, he was an agnostic follower of Mahmūd of Basākhwān.

During the same period of disbelief and scepticism another man Gadāī Brahmadās by name, who belonged to Kālpi and was

1. Chief Justice and religious advisor of Caliph Hārūn al-Rāshid
2. Also known as Hakīm Humām.
3. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh.* Vol. II, p. 214

an affable, witty flatterer found favour with the Emperor. Very soon he rose in the good graces of Akbar and was awarded the proud title of Rājā Bīrbar.[1] Being an intelligent man with intuitive perception of what was the right thing to do in the circumstances he was placed, he took to ridiculing Islamic faith and practices. His wit was rewarded with clapping and applause by all in Akbar's court. Thus, he had also a hand in making Akbar disrespectful of Islam.[2]

Mullā Mubārak and his Sons

Mullā Mubārak of Nāgore also got an access[3] to the Imperial court which brought the intellectual fluster of the Akbar's court to a head. Two of his sons, Faizī and Abul Fazl crept day by day more into favour of the Emperor, until they attained the highest rank, and were honoured with the distinction of becoming the Emperor's closest confidants. A dispassionate study of the character and doings of Mullā Mubārak, Abul Fazl and Faizī would show that all of the three were the best brains of the age and giants of learning, specially in the secular sciences of the time. All the three were well-versed in Persian literature and writers with a facile pen. In short, they were the best products of the system of education then in vogue who could be taken as the most profound men of that generation. Had these brilliant men with sharpness of intellect and depth of knowledge been also gifted with sincerity, purity of spirit, a strong conviction and a desire to follow the divine commands, they would have served a large segment of humanity, perhaps, in a manner unparalleled in history, by saving it from disintegrating forces of the time. Yet, the record of events preserved by historians and

1. *Darbār-i-Akbari* by Muhammad Husain Azad portrays the character and demeanour of Rājā Bīrbar. *See* pp. 336-383
2. *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 164
3. In the *Akbar Nāmah*, Abul Fazl describes the first meeting by his father with the Emperor in the twelfth year of Akbar's reign.

the writings of Abul Fazl and Faizi lead us to the conclusion that:

(1) Mullā Mubārak was impatient and rebellious by nature. His studies of the four juristic schools of Sunnism and their mutual differences did not lead him to find the common chord running through them or to syncretise them through deductive reasoning and interpretation. Instead, he got dissatisfied from all and developed a tendency to reject and refute the whole of juristic thought and researches made by the great scholars. Thereafter he got in touch with the well known scholastic of Shīrāz, Abul Fazl Gāzrūnī, who whetted his craze for theosophy. He did not, however, turn to any spiritual guide who could have helped him to attain higher stages in his spiritual journey as well as warned him against the satanic suggestions and self-deceiving snares of the way: he decided to go it alone by undertaking study of books on mysticism and neo-Platonism and to practice austerities by himself with the result that he developed an still greater mental unrest and volatile temperament. His roving pursuits ultimately convinced him that the easiest course in everything was to swim with the stream. Khawāja Kalān, the son of an eminent mystic of the time, Khwāja Bāqī Billāh, who had been brought up by Shaikh Mubārak's daughter[1], writes about him that "he managed to get along with every manner and complexion popular with the nobles and grandees of the time".[2] Sir Wolsely Haig is of the opinion that "Shaikh Mubārak, the father of Faizī and Abul Fazl, had revelled in spiritual experience. He had been in turn a Sunnī, a Shiah, a Sufī, a Mahdīst, and probably many other things besides."[3]

(2) Besides being amibtious, Mullā Mubārak wanted to be

1. Khwājā Kalān was brought up by Shaikh Mubarak's second daughter who was married to Khwājā Hosām-ud-dīn. *(Tārīkh Hindustān,* Vol. V, p. 947
2. *Mubligh-ur-Rijāl,* p. 33A
3. *Cambridge History of India,* Vol. IV, p. 114

comfortably situated in life. It was against his grain to continue living simply as a bookworm for he wanted to parade his knowledge in the Akbar's court and also to be rewarded for it. He strived to gain an entry in the Imperial court, and although he could not himself get a rise, he succeeded in making his sons close confidants of Akbar. His subsequent behaviour at the court has led Wolseley Haig to conclude that Shaikh Mubārak "had at first no system to offer as a substitute for orthodox Islam, and his object was purely destructive, the complete discomfiture of his enemies."[1]

(3) The religious scholars led by Makhdūm-ul-Mulk and Shaikh 'Abdun Nadī failed to recognise his talents and learning which fitted him for a higher position. He was rather opposed as a heretodox and free-thinker either because of his errant beliefs or vacillating stands, but this gave rise to a feeling of deep resentment in him against the religion itself. Muhammad Husain Āzād, the noted Urdu man of letters and historian of Akbar's reign expresses the view in his grand and forceful style that "hunted down for years by Makhdūm, Sadr and others, the hearts of the Shaikh (Abul Fazl) and his father had been cut up, which were not to be healed with the passage of time."[2] At another place offering an apology for Abul Fazl and Faizī, Azād says that "the harassments undergone by Shaikh Mubārak at the hands of Makhdūm were never forgotten by his sons. Lest these were repeated again, they started sowing seeds of doubt in the mind of Akbar, until Akbar's ideas about Islam were completely changed."[3] Muhammad Husain Āzād was himself liberal-minded, but he had to acknowledge that the "religion of Abul Fazl and Faizi remains undecided like that of their father."

(4) Antagonism of the doctors of religion to Shaikh Mubārak and his own failure to make the mark had given birth

1. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. V, p. 114
2. *Darbār-i-Akbari*, pp. 49-50
3. *Ibid.*, p. 389

to an inferiority complex from which his whole household suffered and laboured hard to redress the wrong by parading its superiority over others. They did their best to demonstrate the invincibility of their own intellect and knowledge, and, unfortunately, Islam and its way of life became the target of their attack. A time came when the two brothers enjoyed unbounded confidence of the Emperor, to the exclusion of all other persons; they threw every other person into shadow; but then Islam was in flames, and Abul Fazl often used to recite the verses:[1]

I have set fire to my barn with my own hands,
As I am the incendiary, how can I complain of my enemy!
No one is my enemy but myself,
Woe is me! I have torn my garment with my own hands.

Of the two sons of Mulla Mubārak, both talented and learned, the elder was Abul Faiz Faizī (born 954/1547) and the younger was Abul Fazl (b. 958/1551)

Faizi was a litterateur by his own right. There can be no two opinions about his being a great scholar and a great poet. Shiblī writes in the *Sha'ir-ul-'Ajam* that Persian poetry in India had given birth to two poets only, during the long stretch of six hundred years, whose greatness has been acknowledged even by the Persians: one of these was Khusru and the other was Faizī. He took Khwājā Husain of Marv as his teacher and attained mastery in every branch of study. First introduced to Akbar in 974/1566, he immediately won the admiration of the Emperor. In a short time he became Akbar's constant companion and friend. He was not given any particular assignment at the court and engaged himself as a physician, a writer and a poet; Prince Dāniāl was placed under his charge in the twelfth year of Akbar's reign, and in a few years his royal disciple attained proficiency in all the arts and sciences. This was also the year in which Akbar recited the Friday sermon in readiness to assume temporal as well

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 202

as spiritual authority over his subjects. This sermon was written by Faizī. Thereafter the office of Sadr-us-Sudūr was decentralised by appointing provincial Sadars in order to curtail the powers of Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī. Faizī was appointed Sadr for the provinces of Āgrā, Kālinjar and Kalpī in 990/1582, and then sent at the head of an army, in 993/1586, to suppress the uprising of Yūsufza'ī Pathāns. In the thirty-third year of Akbar's rule, Faizī was honoured with title of "Prince of Poets". He was accredited to the rulers of Khāndesh as the envoy of the Emperor in 996/1589, and there he acquitted himself of the task with commendable success. Faizī died in 1004/1596.

Faizī composed many works of prose and poetry and did some translations from Sanskrit besides the famous *Sawāt'ī-ul-Ilhām*[1], which is a commentary on the Qur'ān employing only undotted letters. Faizī took two years to write this work, which was completed in 1002/1594, and showed his command over Arabic philology and grammer. He was proud of his achievement for which Akbar rewarded him ten thousand rupees.[2] Badāūnī was at variance with the religious views of Faizī but he frankly

1. Faizī had taken pains to use only undotted letters. The commentary, which was treated as a marvel, was written to refute the charge that he had little knowledge of religious sciences. But whatever command its author possessed over Arabic language this work shows that it contains hardly anything of importance, and throws little light upon the wisdom contained in the Scripture, nor has it any literary or practical value. It can better be compared with micrography of certain calligraphers who write a whole verse of the Qur'ān on a grain of rice. Another work completed during the same period by a Syrian scholar Muhammad Badr-ud-dīn alias Ibn al-Ghazzī al-Damishqī (d. 984/1550), was perhaps much more valuable. He had composed a poetical commentary of the Qur'ān consisting of 180 thousand verses along with a summary. The commentary was found to be strictly in accordance with the orthodox view. (*Al-Kawākib us-Sāirah* by Najm-ud-dīn al-Ghazzī; Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Ghizzi, Vol. II, p. 252 and *Al-Badr-ut tal'e*, V. 2, p. 252)

2. *Ma'āthir ul-Umarā*, Vol. II, p. 587

admits his learning:

> "In many separate branches of knowledge, such as poetry, the composition of enigmas, prosody, rhyme, history, philology, medicine, and prose composition Shaikh Faizī had no equal in his time."[1]

Being a great lover of books, Faizī had collected 4,600 books in his private library. Many of these are reported to have been written by Faizī himself.

Badāūnī and many other scholars of the time who were devoted to their religion were deeply perturbed at the policy pursued by Akbar. They were all of one mind that Faizī was, like his father, a heterodox, and that he was responsible for making Akbar irreligious and heretical. Faizī's character as depicted by Badāūnī is clear enough: after making allowance for Badāūnī's rhetorical flourishes, the picture of Faizī that emerges from his writings is that of a free thinker little influenced by scruples. Shiblī has tried to defend Faizī in the *Sha'ir-ul-'Ājam* but even he could not help acknowledging the fact that Faizī was a liberal who held the view that the Islam as conceived by the bigoted Mullās did not depict it correctly. Faizī treated the disputes between Shiā's and Sunnīs as unrelated to Islam and mocked at them. Giving a few examples, from Faizī's writings, to show how Faizī ridiculed these matters, Shiblī goes on to say that Faizī and Abul Fazl contrived to have the religious discussions which made it apparant to all the courtiers that the only expedient that the bigots resorted to was to denounce others as apostates.[2]

It seems that Faizi was known, during his life-time, to have entertained irreligious and atheistic ideas. Faizī met a tragic end which gave occasion to several chronograms for calculating the year of his death.[3]

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, Vol. III, pp. 299
2. *'Sha'ir-ul-'Ajam*, Vol. III, pp. 49-50
3. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, p. 420 and *Darbār-i Akbari*, p. 471

Abul Fazl was also a versatile genius, far above others in dexterity with an uncommon intelligence. His compositions, in prose, stand unique and inimitable like the verses of his elder brother. As he writes in the *Akbar Nāmah* he became 'egotistic and self-conceited' in the beginning and 'the foot of his energy rested for a while in admiration of his own excellence' but this later on 'put into his head the thought of asceticism and retirement'.[1] Ultimately he became a believer in the rational way and disdainful of orthodoxy.[2]

Abul Fazl was presented at Akbar's Court in 981/1573, when he wrote a commentary on the Quranic verse known as *Āyatal-Kursi*. A year later, he produced a commentary of the *Sūrat-ul-Fath* and presented it to the Emperor after which he grew in favour and power, until he rose to the office of the Prime Minister. The greatest of his literary productions was *Āin-i-Akbari* which is a valuable and minute statistical account of the military, industrial, agricultural, economic, social, cultural, intellectual and religious life of India during the Mughal rule. His another work of great merit, the *Akbar Nāmah*[3] is a record of day to day events of the time. He has to his credit a collection or letters called *Inshā'i-Abul Fazl* and a few other works of repute. He was murdered by Bīr Singh Deo Bundela at the instance of Jahangir in 1011/1602. Akbar wept bitterly on learning the death of his friend and was for a time beside himself with grief and rage.

In an estimate of Abul Fazl, Dr. Muhammad Bāqar writes, "Abul Fazl weilded considerable influence over Akbar's religious leanings. When Akbar built his *'Ibādat-Khāna* or "Hall of Worship", in 982/1574, which was a hall of debate on religious

1. *Akbar Nāmah*, Vol. III, p. 117
2. *Bazm-i-Taimūriyāh*, p. 163.
3. Carra De Vaux writes in the *Les Penseurs Des-l'Islam* that the *Akbar Nāmah* is a literary document on which the East can justly take pride, for the intelligence of those introduced through the book were definitely ahead of their times in the art of governance and administration.

matters, Abul Fazl made it a point to attend the discussions and to support Akbar's views, until he led Akbar to believe that his views were far superior to those of the contemporary doctors of religion. In 987/1579, an Infallibility Decree was promulgated which made Akbar the judicator in disputes between the religious scholars. It was in the midst of these disputations in the Hall of Worship that Akbar thought of proclaiming a new religion and he did formally declare the advent of Dīn-i-llāhī in 991/1583. Abul Fazl also joined his faith to the new religion."[1] Abul Fazl's adoption of the Akbar's creed, no doubt, confirms his apostasy from Islam, but Jahāngīr accuses him of misguiding his father while secretly retaining his convictions as a Muslim.[2] A great controversy rages round Abul Fazl's faith and the reason for his abjuring Islam but if the story told by Badāūnī is correct, it might have been simply to gain his private ends. Once Hakīm-ul-Mulk and some other scholars sent privately a message to Abul Fazl by Āsaf Khān Bakhshī, "Why are you always falling foul of us ?" Abul Fazl sent back the answer, "The fact of the matter is I am the servant of a mere mortal, and not of an egg-plant."[3]

Views, however, differ on the question whether Abul Fazl was a man of liberal outlook free from religious bigotry or he was a perverter of truth and a deceiver of the faithful. He has generally been regarded as a broad-minded narrator of facts who often indulged in fulsome flattery of his master, but was absolutely free from the prejudices of the petty minds. However, an incident narrated differently by him and Badāūnī might help us to analyse the objects and designs Abul Fazl had taken into his head.

1. (Urdu) *Dā'irat Ma'ārif Islāmiyah*, Vol. I, pp. 889-90
2. Major Price's translation of the *Tūzuk Jahāngīrī* contains the story how Prince Salīm found forty scribes copying commentaries of the Qur'ān at Abul Fazl's house.
3. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, pp. 270-71

A controversy in the Hall of Worship on the respective merits of the Bible and the Qur'ān aroused, on a certain occasion, an abnormal heat and each side claimed its Scripture as the divine book. Akbar sent for Shaikh Qutb-ud-dīn, a mystic, who challenged the Christian priests to make a peat fire and pass through it with him to prove the truth of his religion. Now, according to Badāūnī, "the fire was made. The Shaikh pulled one of the Christian priests by coat and said to him: 'Come on, in the name of God.' But none of the priests had the courage to go"[1] Abul Fazl's version, on the other hand, begins with Padre Radif (Father Rudolf), "singular for his understanding and ability," making "points in the feast of intelligence" and "some of the untruthful bigots" coming forward "in a blundering way to answer him". There being no truth present in their arguments, the adversaries of Rudolf "were ashamed, and abandoned such discourse, and applied themselves to perverting the words of the Gospels." Then, Rudolf challenged to have the issue decided by resort to a trial by fire but "the liverless and black-hearted fellows wavered, and in reply to the challenge had recourse to bigotry and wrangling. This cowardice and effrontery displeased his (Akbar's) equitable soul."[2]

The Italian missionary Rudolf Aquaviva, who had called upon Akbar, was also accompanied by a Spaniard Anthony Monserrate and a Persian convert Francis Henriquez. Monserrate has left a narrative of his experiences at the Akbar's court in a Latin work entitled *Mongolicae Legationis Commentarius* in which he absolves Rudolf of the charge of cowardice but acknowledges that the challenge came from the Muslim divine and it was rejected by Rudolf on the ground that it amounted to tempting God and was contrary to the Christian religion.[3]

Abul Fazl's version of the story, his defence of Rudolf and

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, p. 308
2. *Akbar Nāmah*, Vol. III, p. 369
3. *Commentarius*, pp. 39-42

the diatribe against Muslim scholars couched in the language of a bitter fanatic hardly establish him as a man of lofty and blameless character with a liberal outlook. We find several other instances of his tempering with facts or concealing them which show that he was as much a bigot as the orthodox whom he cursed for their fanaticism. It should not have been difficult for a man of his genius to turn the illiterate monarch against Islam in his bid to break the power and spell of the religious scholars whom he considered his inveterate enemies.

Ma'āthir ul-Umarā cites Jahāngīr as saying: "Shaikh Abul Fazl had led my revered father to believe that his speech was exceptionally graceful and that the Qur'ān was his own composition. Therefore, when he was returning from Deccan I asked Bīr Singh Deo to kill him. After his death, my revered father renounced that belief."[1]

But, a confession by Abul Fazl is the most conclusive evidence for it indicates, in unmistakable terms, that he felt conscience-smitten at the role played by him in raising the Emperor to the level of impeccable leader and universal guide.[2] It seems that at times he reproached himself for the wrong committed by him. In a letter addressed to Khān Khānān, he writes:

> "A tragic aspect of this calamitous story is that the writer of these lines has, by his entaglement in unavailing tasks, degraded himself from a worshipper of God to the slave of his instincts and reached such a stage that he

1. *Ma'āthir ul-Umarā*, p. 617; Saiyid Sabāh-ud-dīn Abdur Rahmān writes in the *Bazm-i-Taimūriyah* that the statement attributed to Jahāngir is not to be found in the Newal Kishore edition of the *Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, but it is corroborated by the copy used by Major David Price for the translation of Jahāngīr's Memoirs into English, (p. 166)
2. Abul Fazl's veneration of Akbar amounts almost to Akbar's adoration. Mark the titles of honour used by him for Akbar: 'of pure-heart—unspotted by the world—leader of spiritual realm—of enduring alertness' (p. 3), 'supplicant of God' (p. 520), 'the world's lord' (p. 481). See *Akbar Nāmah*, Vol. III.

should be known as the serf of the pelf instead of a bondman of God..... He expresses his grief through these lines for he is aware that his foolish strivings of forty-three years, especially the tussle he has had with the timeservers during the last twelve years, have left him neither capable of self-restraint nor of abstinence. I write this to make a public confession of my weaknesses :

I have neither the strength to abstain from love,
Nor the luck to meet the friend.
I do not have the hands to fight my destiny,
Nor do I have the legs to get away from it."[1]

Influence of Rājpūt Spouses

A great test for Akbar and also one of the important reasons for his abjuring Islam was the matrimonial alliances he had established with the Rājpūt rulers and, then, for being closer to them and winning their confidence he raised them to the highest positions. With the same end in view he adopted such customs and habits as were never practised by the preceding kings and sultāns of India. He forbade slaughter of the cows, gave *darshan* to his Hindu subjects every morning facing the sun, shaved the beard, put a mark on his forehead according to Hindu fashion, observed Hindu festivals and ceremonies alongwith the Rājpūt ladies in his haram and did several other things of the kind. One of his wives was the daughter of Rājā Bihārī Mal of Amber who eventually became the mother of Jahāngīr. Akbar also received in his service Mān Singh, the nephew and adopted son of Bhagwān Dās, Bihārī Mal's heir. His other Rājpūt consorts were a relation of Rai Kalyān Mal, Rājā of Bīkāner and the daughter of Rawal Har Rā'i of Jaisalmer. It was but natural that Akbar would have been influenced by his Rājpūt spouses and their kinsmen on whose support he depended for strengthening his empire. Actually, these kinships contributed to a personal

1. *Inshā-i-Abul Fazl*, Vol. II, p. 102, (Lucknow, 1883)

bitterness which finally led Akbar to nurse a grouse against the Muslim orthodoxy.

This eventful episode came about in this manner. One Qāzī 'Abdur Rahīm of Mathura laid a complaint before Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī that a wealthy and stiff-necked Brahman of that place had carried off the materials he had collected for the construction of a mosque, and had built of them a temple, and that when the Muslims attempted to prevent him, the Brahman had cursed the Prophet. Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī called upon the Brahman to appear before him. The Emperor deputed Bīrbal and Abul Fazl to enquire into the matter who reported back that the complaint against the Brahman was correct. The Shaikh decided that the Brahman should suffer death for his crime, but as he was the personal priest of the Queen, she interceded for his release. At last, Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī passed orders for execution of the Brahman, but Akbar was exceedingly wroth at the importunity of the Shaikh in getting that verdict put into effect without waiting for his orders. The matter did not come to an end with the execution of the Brahman for it caused a great irritation to Akbar and his spouses. Badāūnī reports that "the ladies of his harem compained in private and the Hindu courtiers in public, saying, "you have pampered these Mullās till their insolence has reached such a pitch that they pay no heed to your wishes".[1] Akbar continued to ascertain the punishment to be inflicted on accusers of the Prophet according to the prevalent Hanafite Law. He was ultimately led to believe by the opponents of the Shaikh that the latter had not acted in accordance with the law of the land.

From this time forth the fortunes of Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī began to decline.

Infallibility Decree

The incident also provided an opportunity to Shaikh

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh*, Vol. III, pp. 128-30

Mubārak, already inaflamed with rancour and ill will, to advise Akbar that he should get rid of the doctors of religion. When asked to express his opinion about the matter agitating the mind of Akbar, he replied, "Your Majesty is the Imām and Mujtahid of the age. What need have you of these 'Ulamā' for assistance in issuing your commands, whether religious or secular!"[1] It was after this incident that Shaikh Mubārak wrote a decree affirming the religious supremacy of the Emperor and his superiority to all ecclesiastical dignitaries which ultimately proved to be the fore-runner of Akbar's apostasy and ensuing state policy fostering intellectual and cultural perversion. This Decree stated that :

> "The rank of Sultān-i-'ādil[2] is higher in the eyes of God than the rank of a Mujtahid[3]."
>
> "Further we declare that the King of Islām, Amir of the Faithful, shadow of God in the world, Abu-l-Fath Jalāl-ud-din Muhammad Akbar Bādshāh Ghāzī (whose kingdom God perpetuate!) is a most just, a most wise, and a most God-fearing king."
>
> "Should therefore in future a religious question come up, regarding which the opinions of the Mujtahids are at variance, and His Majesty in his penetrating understanding and clear wisdom be inclined to adopt, for the benefit of the nation, and as a political expedient, any of the conflicting opinions, which exist on that point, and issue a decree to that effect, we do hereby agree that such a decree shall be binding on us and on the whole nation."[4]

This document was prepared in Rajab 987 A.H.[5] and became an imperial decree for the whole country. All the doctors of

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh*, Vol. III, p. 131
2. Just ruler
3. Authority on point of law.
4. *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 279
5. August-September, 1579 A.D.

religion were made to affix their signatures, in compliance with the wish of Akbar, on the document which made the decisions of the Emperor infalliable even in religious matters, and thus opened the way to tergiversation from the path of Islam. Shaikh Mubārak was last to sign the document but he added after his signature : "This is an affair which I desired with all my heart and soul, and for the accomplishment of which I have been waiting for years."[1]

Significance of the Decree

The notion of extending unconditional support to a ruler and defence of his illegal actions through specious arguments and misinterpretation of the sacred law is not entirely foreign to the annals of Islamic countries. The religious scholars had blundered several times and given their assent to a royal decree which was unbecoming of their exalted position but never had they set their seal on a document prepared awovedly for a purpose contrary to the interests of Islam by a scheming mind like Shaikh Mubārak. The document conferred an authority on the young king[2] over the doctors of law and allowed him to adopt one of the conflicting opinions delivered by the jurists of Islam. One who was illiterate was acclaimed as the most just, wise and enlightened with the knowledge of God; this man was already inclined towards free-going; his confidence in the scholars of Islam had already been shaken; and he was adopting polytheistic customs and manners under the polluting influence of his court and household. And he was also an absolute ruler, an undisputed master of his dominions. It is not difficult to see that he

1. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 123. As Badāūnī claims, Shaikh Mubārak was the chief contriver of the affair, and it was he who drafted the document. Nizām-ud-dīn also mentions Mubārak (*Tabaqāt*, Vol. II, p. 523) as one of the signatories but it is curious that Abul Fazl does not mention his father Mubārak as one of those who signed the document.
2. Akbar was only thirty-eight years of age at the time.

could have been easily exploited by those self-seeking and unscrupulous courtiers who were careful to offend the king in nothing and lead him to relinquish every limit prescribed by religion. Their only aim was discomfiture of their opponents. A man so learned as Shaikh Mubārak would not have failed to visualize the outcome of his actions and thus it is not difficult to see what his motive was in taking this course. A historian to whom everything is clear today can ask him in the words of an Arab poet who said :

'It was regrettable if you did not know the outcome of your action,
But terrible it was, if you knew and did it knowingly.'

Fall of Makhdūm-ul-Mulk and Sadr-as-Sudūr

Signing of the Infallibility Decree, zealously supported by Shaikh Mubārak, marked an increase in the influence of his sons, Faizī and Abul Fazl, and a decline in the authority of Makhdūm-ul-Mulk Mullā 'Abdullah of Sultānpūr and Sadr-as-Sudūr Maulānā 'Abdun Nabī of Gangoh. Both these persons withdrew themselves and avoided attending the court, but they were seized one day and on being brought to the court were made to sit in the row of shoes.[1] Not long thereafter both were banished to Mecca. Makhdūm-ul-Mulk left for Hijāz, in 987/1579, where he was warmly received by the scholars. Shaikh Shahāb-ud-dīn Ahmad b. Hajar Haitamī, an eminent scholar of the time, showed greatest marks of honour to Makhdūm-ul-Mulk. He returned to India in 990/1582 after an stay of about three years in Hijaz but was administered poison on reaching Gujarāt and died at that place. There are reasons to believe that he was poisoned at the instance of the Emperor. Khawāfī Khān has laid this charge on Akbar in the *Ma'āthir-ul-Umarā*.[2]

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh*. Vol. III, p. 131
2. *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. IV

Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī also went to perform the *haj*. After remaining there for sometime he returned to India as if he still hoped to regain the position and honour lost by him. He approached the Emperor through Gulbadan Begum for being forgiven. As 'Abdul Qādir Badāūnī says, the Emperor had him arrested and handed him over to Rājā Todar Mal to make him settle the account of some money given to him. He died as a prisoner but the *Ma'āthir-ul-Umarā* records that Akbar had later on asked Abul Fazl to deal with the Shaikh, whom he eventually strangled in the prison.[1]

The New Millennium and Divine Faith

The next step, after making Akbar an Infallible Emperor and indisputable religious guide, was to invent a new religion. Islam was soon to complete one thousand years of its existence; the new millennium was treated by many as the advent of a new era, a new life of the world; they expected a new religion, a new order and a new law-giver for the new millennium; and nobody was better suited to act as its heralder than the Emperor already recognised as the most just and wise. Badāūnī writes:

> "And since, in His Majesty's opinion, it was a settled fact that the 1000 years since the time of the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him), which was to be the period of the continuance of the faith of Islam, were now completed, no hinderance remained to the promulgation of those secret designs, which he nursed in his heart."[2]

1. *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol IV. M'utmad Khān writes in the *Iqbāl Nāmah*, (Vol. II, account of the 27th year) that Shaikh 'Abdun Nabī was put in the charge of Abul Fazl who by reason of his old enmity had him strangled. Abul Fazl (*Akbar Nāmah*, Vol. III, pp. 572-73) simply says that he died in the prison but does not give the reason, which must have been known to him. His silence on the subject is not without significance.
2. *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 311

Akbar now felt at liberty to embark fearlessly on his designs of annulling and altering the ordinances of Islam. The first command that was issued was this : that the "Era of the Thousand" should be stamped on the coins, and that a *Tārīkh-i-Alfi*,[1] a new history marking the line of demarcation in human civilisation should be written. The board of seven scholars charged to complete the task was ordered to date the events with reference to the death of the Prophet instead of his migration from Mecca.[2]" The commonalty was made to believe that it was the time when the leader of the world should appear to efface the difference between the sects of Islam, and it could be nobody else save the Emperor with angelic qualities.

Thus began the 'Divine Faith' of Akbar. Its creed enjoined not faith in one God but star-worship in the form of divine service to the sun while resurrection on the Day of Judgement was rejected in favour of rebirth. Akbar used to admit disciples to his faith with a formula of testimony which added *Akbar Khalīfat Allāh* (Akbar is the vicegerant of God) after *Lā Ilāh Illallāh* (There is no god but God). The disciples were also required to sign a covenant which ran as follows :

> I, so and so, son of so and so, do voluntarily with sincere predilictions and inclination, utterly and entirely renounce and repudiate the religion of Islam which I have seen and heard of my fathers, and do embrace the Divine Religion of Akbar Shāh, and do accept the four grades of entire devotion, viz. sacrifice of property, life, honour and religion."[3]

Usury, gambling, wine and pork were made lawful by the new religion, slaughter of cows was banned, the laws relating to marriage were amended, *purdah*[4] and circumcission were for-

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, p. 311
2. *Ibid.*, p. 327
3. *Ibid.*, p. 314
4. Seclusion of women in their houses.

bidden, prostitutes were settled in a separate ward and rules were made for the trade of flesh and religious form of burial was changed. In short, a new Indian religion was devised which, like the religions of old, met halfway the passions and desires of carnal nature and made it a handmaid of personal and political interests of the king[1].

Akbar's religious Ideas and Practices

What religious doctrines and practices Akbar's vanity had persuaded him to adopt can be seen from the descriptions left by his closest friend and favourite, Abul Fazl 'Allāmī. These are but a few references to the religious metamorphosis of Akbar but they are sufficient enough to demonstrate how he tried to shackle and choke off Islam.

Fire Worship

"His Majesty maintains that it is a religious duty and

1. Dr. Vincent Smith says that "the whole gist of the regulations was to further the adoption of Hindu, Jain and Parsi practices, while discouraging or positively prohibiting essential Muslim rites. The policy of insult to and persecution of Islam which was carried to greater extremes subsequently, was actively pursued, even in the period from 1582 to 1585." Another historian, Wolsely Haig, writes that Akbar's "discourse was ever of universal toleration, but in practice he excepted the faith in which he had been bred". (*Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, pp. 125, 131). Another scholar, Dr. A. L. Srivastava, who has put up a spirited defence of Akbar's religious policies, says that Jainism alone was not responsible for the effect on "Akbar's belief and conduct. Hinduism had an undoubted share." (*Akbar the Great*, Vol. I, p. 400). V. D. Mahajan writes in the *Muslim Rule in India* that "as the Hindus had great sanctity for cows, the use of beef was forbidden." (Part II, p. 95). Yet another historian who defends Akbar's religious policy, admits that "The Emperor's disregard of the religion of the Prophet, which was manifest in the rules and regulations issued by him further exasperated the learned in the law and produced a great uneasiness in the minds of the Muslims. (Dr. Ishwari Prasad, *The Mughal Empire*, p. 248.)

divine praise to worship fire and light; surely, ignorant men consider this forgetfulness of the Almighty, and fire-worship. But the deep-sighted know better."[1]

"And when the sun sets, the attendants light twelve white candles, on twelve candlesticks of gold and silver, and bring them before His Majesty, when a singer of sweet melodies, with a candle in his hand, sings a variety of delightful airs to the praise of God, beginning and concluding with a prayer for the continuance of this auspicious reign."[2]

Sun Worship

"The *Do-Āshiyāna Manzil*, or house of two storeys, is raised upon eighteen pillars, six yards in height which support a wooden platform, and into this, pillars of four cubits in length are fixed with bolts and nuts, forming an upper storey. The inside and outside are ornamented, as in the preceding. On the march it is used by His Majesty as a sleeping apartment, and also as a place of divine worship, where he prays to the Sun."[3]

A happy saying of His Majesty on the subject is: "A special grace proceeds from the sun in favour of kings, and for this reason they pray and consider it a worship of the Almighty; but the short-sighted are thereby scandalised."[4]

His Majesty's another utterance runs: "How can the common people possessed only with the desire of gain, look with respect upon sordid men of wealth? From ignorance these fail in reverence to this fountain of light, and reproach him who prays to it. If their understanding were not at fault how could they forget the *surah* beginning '*By the Sun*".[5]

1. *Ā'in-i-Akbarī*, Vol. I, p. 50
2. *Ibid.*, p. 51
3. *Ibid.*, p. 56
4. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 435
5. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 435

On Painting

One day at a private party of friends, His Majesty, who had conferred on several the pleasure of drawing near him, remarked: "There are many that hate painting; but such men I dislike. It appears to me as if a painter had quite peculiar means of recognizing God, for a painter in sketching anything that has life, and in devising its limbs, one after the other, must come to feel that he cannot bestow individuality upon his work, and is thus forced to think of God, the giver of life, and will thus increase his knowledge."[1]

Timings of Prayer

"He passes every moment of his life...in adoration of God. He especially does so at the time, when morning spreads her azure silk, and scatters abroad her young, golden beams; and at noon, when the light of the world-illuminating sun embraces the universe, and thus becomes a source of joy for all men; in the evening when that fountain of light withdraws from the eyes of mortal man."[2]

Prostration before His Majesty

"They (the disciples of His Majesty) look upon a prostration before His Majesty as a prostration performed before God."[3]

"At the above mentioned time of everlasting auspiciousness, the novice with his turban in his hands, puts his head on the feet of His Majesty. This is symbolical, and expresses that the novice, guided by good fortune and the assistance of his good star, has cast aside conceit and selfishness, the root of so many evils, offers his heart in worship, and now comes

1. *Ā'in-i-Akbarī*, Vol. I, p. 115
2. *Ibid.*, p. 163
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 167

to inquire as to means of obtaining everlasting life."[1]

Salutation of Divine Faith

"The members of the Divine Faith, on seeing each other, observe the following custom. One says, *'Allāh-o-Akbar'*, and the other responds, *'Jall-a-Jalālhu'*."[2]

Aversion to Hijrī Calendar

"His Majesty had long desired to introduce a new computation of years and months throughout the fair region of Hindustān in order that perplexity might give place to easiness. He was likewise averse to the era of the *Hijra* (Flight) which was of ominous signification, but because of the number of shortsighted, ignorant men who believe the currency of the era to be inseparable from religion, His Imperial Majesty in his graciousness, dearly regarding the attachment of the hearts of his subjects did not carry out his design of suppressing it."[3]

Un-Islamic Feasts and Festivals

"The new Year's Day feast—It commences on the day when the Sun in his splendour moves to Aries, and lasts till the nineteenth day of the month (*Farwardin*). Two days of this period are considered great festivals, when much money and numerous other things are given away as presents; the first day of the month of *Farwardin*, and the nineteenth, which is time of *Sharaf*. Again, His Majesty followed the custom of the ancient Parsis, who held banquets on those days the names of which coincided with the name of a month.[4] The following are the days which have the same name as a

1. *Ā'in-i-Akbari*, p. 174
2. *Ibid.*, p. 175
3. *Ibid.* Vol. II, p. 30
4. Thus *Ābān* was the name of the eighth month (October-November); but the tenth day also of every month had the same name.

month: 19th *Farwardīn*; 3rd *Urdībihishtī*; 6th *Khūrdād*; 13th *Tir*; 7th *Amūrdād*; 4th *Shahriwār*; 16th *Mihr*; 10th *Ābān*; 9th *Āzar*; 8th, 15th, 23rd Day; 2nd *Bahman*; 15th *Isfandarmuz*."[1]

Vegetarianism

His Imperial Majesty said, "Were it not for the thought of the difficulty of sustenance, I would prohibit men from eating meat. The reason why I do not altogether abandon it myself is that many others might willingly forego it likewise and be thus cast into despondency. From my earliest years, whenever I ordered animal food to be cooked for me, I found it rather tasteless and cared little for it."[2]

His Majesty also said, "Butchers, fishermen and the like who have no other occupation but taking life, should have a separate quarter and their association with others should be prohibited by fine,"[3]

"His Majesty has also ordered that members (of his Divine Faith) should endeavour to abstain from eating flesh.....during the month of their birth they are not even to approach meat... Neither shall they make use of the same vessels with butchers, fishers and bird catchers."[4]

Swine

His Imperial Majesty observed, "If the reason of the prohibition of swine (as food) be due to its vileness, lions and the like should be held lawful."[5]

1. *Āīn-i-Akbarī*, Vol. I, p. 286
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 446
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 446. This was the old Hindu and a Buddhistic rule, Fa Hien observed that in North India in 399 A.D., "Only the Chandālās are fishermen and hunters sell flesh meat.....They are held to be wicked men, and live apart from others."
4. *Ā'īn-i-Akbarī*, Vol. I, p. 176
5. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 441

Drinking Bout

"The Sadr and Abd'l-Hay, the Chief Justice of the Empire, took part in a drinking feast, and Akbar was so amused at seeing his ecclesiastical and judicial dignitaries over their cups, that he quoted the well-known verse from Hāfiz:

"In the era of King, clement and fault-forgiving,
The Qāzī sucked up flagons, the Mufti drained the cup."[1]

Adoption of the Un-Islamic Customs

"One of the occurances was the death of Bica Jio[2]..... and the world's lord was sad. In his grief he shaved his head and moustaches, and though he tried that none should shave except her children, his faithful servants followed suit."[3]

Rejection of Miracles

The Emperor said, "The vulgar believe in miracles, but the wise men accept nothing without adequate proof."[4]

Dislike for Circumcision

His Imperial Majesty observed, "It is remarkable that men should insist on ceremoney of circumcision for children who are otherwise excused from the burden of all religious obligations."[5]

Marriage Regulations

Marriage between near relations His Majesty thinks highly improper.....He says, "Marriage between first cousins, however, does not strike the bigoted followers of Muhammad's religion

1. *Ā'īn-i-Akbarī*, Vol. I, p. 522
2. Jijū Anga, the foster mother of Akbar
3. *Akbar Nāmah*, Vol. III, p. 1153
4. *Ā'īn-i-Akbarī*, Vol. III, p. 428
5. *Ibid.*, p. 441

as wrong; for the beginning of a religion resembles, in this regard, the beginning of the creation of mankind.....Nor does His Majesty approve of any one marrying more than one wife."[1]

Divine Worship of Kings

His Majesty said, "The very sight of kings has been held to be a part of divine worship. They have been styled conventionally as the shadow of God, and indeed to behold them is a means of calling to mind the Creator, and suggests the protection of the Almighty."[2]

Introduction of Ilāhī Calendar

"In 992 (A.D. 1584) of the Novilunar year, the lamp of knowledge received another light from the flame of his sublime intelligence and its full blaze shone upon mankind. The fortunately gifted, lovers of truth raised their heads from the pillow of disappointment and the crooked-charactered, drowsy-willed lay in the corner of disuse. Meanwhile the Imperial design was accomplished. Amīr Fathullah Shīrāzī, the representative of ancient sages, the paragon of the house of wisdom, set himself to the fulfilment of this object, and taking as his base the recent Gurgānī Canon, began the era with the accession of His Imperial Majesty."[3]

There appears to be no harm, after giving an outline of Akbar's religious thought by a historian who cannot be accused of bigotry or bearing any ill-will to him, in supplementing this description with the details given by Nizām-ud-dīn and 'Abdul Qādir Badāūnī. Akbar's aversion to Islam, established by the statements of Abul Fazl, goes to strengthen the charge laid by Badāūnī that Akbar had not only forsaken his faith in Islam

1. *Ā'īn-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, p. 268
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 450
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 30

but also detested everything connected with that faith and its founder.

Remission of Zakāt

"The beginning of this year was Saturday the fifth of Safar, 989 A.H.[1] During this year in accordance with his natural kindness and inherent generosity, (the emperor) issued an order for abolition in the whole of his dominion of the *Tamgha*[2] and the *zakāt* and *farmāns* founded on justice were issued to emphasise this act."[3]

Disapproval of Islamic Learning

"Reading and learning of Arabic was looked as a crime; the Muhammadan law, and the exegesis of the Qur'ān, and the Traditions, as also those who studied them were considered bad and deserving of disapproval....Two verses from the *Shāhnāma* which Firdausī of Tus gives as part of a story, were frequently quoted at Court:—

Through the eating of the milk of camels and lizards,
The Arabs have made such progress,
That they now wish to get hold of the kingdom of Persia,
Fie upon Fate! Fie upon Fate!"[4]

Mockery of Prophet's Ascension

"One night the Emperor, in Fath-ullah's presence, said to

1. 10th or 11th March, 1581 A.D. It is noteworthy that Abul Fazl omits to mention the abolition of *zakāt* in the *Akbar Nāmah* in his barefaced partiality to preserve the dignity of his master. A reference to it has, however, been made by him in his letter (*Inshā'at Abul Fazl*, Lucknow, 1281, pp. 67-68). These edicts were issued in 26th year of Akbar's reign according to Nizām-ud-dīn and in the 25th year according to Badāūnī.
2. *Tamgha* originally meaning a seal or any document bearnig a seal, was rent-free land given for religious and charitable purposes.
3. *Tabaqāt-i-Akbarī*, Vol. II, pp. 526-27
4. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, p. 317

Bīr Bar, "I really wonder how any one in his senses can believe that a man, when body has a certain weight, could in the space of a moment leave his bed; there are 90,000 conversations with God, and yet on his return finds his bed still warm!" So also was the splitting of the moon ridiculed. "Why", said His Majesty, lifting up one foot, "it is really impossible for me to lift up the other. What silly stories men will believe".[1]

Disparging Remarks about the Prophet

"Other remarks were passed on the 'straying camel'. Some again expressed their astonishment that the Prophet in the beginning of his career plundered the carvans of Quraish; that he had fourteen wives.....And many other things which it would take too long to recount."[2]

Antipathy and Irritation at the Prophet's Names

"Names like *Ahmad*, *Muhammad*, *Mustafa*, etc. became offensive to His Majesty, who thereby wished to please the infidels outside and the princes inside the Harem, till after some time those courtiers, who had such names, changed them; and such names as *Yār Muhammad*, *Muhammad Khān*, were altered to *Rahmat*."[3]

Prohibition of Prayer

"During those days also the public prayers, and the *azān*

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, p. 326
2. *Ibid.* p. 318
3. *Muntakhabut-Tawārīkh*, Vol II, p. 324. Accordingly, Abul Fazl omits in the *Aīn-i-Akbarī*, (Vol. I) Muhammad and Ahmad from the names of certain Amirs, as, for example, he writes Mun'im Khān for Muhammad Mun'im (p. 333), Mirzā 'Azīz for Mirzā Muhammad 'Azīz (p. 343) and Shihāb Khān for Shihāb-ud-din Ahmad Khān (p. 352). Many more examples of similar nature can be given.

(call to prayer), which was chanted five times a day for assembly to prayer in the state hall, were abolished".[1]

"The prayers of Islam, the fast, nay even the pilgrimage, were henceforth forbidden."[2]

Mockery of Islamic Values

"Abul Fazl, when once in favour with the Emperor, took every opportunity of reviling in the most shameful way that sect whose labours and motives have been so little appreciated."[3]

A Dangerous Turning Point for Muslim India

The religious policy of Akbar has ever remained a controversial issue for the historians of Mughal Rule in India. Some of them like Muhammad Husain Azad, S.R. Sharma, Dr. R.P. Tripathi, Dr. Ishwari Prasad and others have taken pains to argue that Akbar lived and died as a Muslim and that *Dīn-i-Ilāhī* was neither a religion nor Akbar ever intended the establishment of a church. They reject the testimony of Badāūnī as reckless and indiscriminate and swayed by fanaticism. Their argument rests on the ground that Badāūnī's charges are not substantiated by Abul Fazl and other contemporary accounts save the Jesuit versions which, however, show reliance on hearsy and apprehensions of the orthodox party in Akbar's court. These historians place confidence only in court chronicles and shut their eyes to the mass of contemporary accounts found in the biographies, memoirs, letters and the discourses (*malfūzāt*) of the sufi Shaikhs written during the period. What is still more surprising, they lightly pass over the references to Akbar's un-Islamic views and measures given in the *Āin-i-Akbarī* itself some of which have

1. *Muntakhabut-Tawārikh*, Vol. II, p. 324.
2. *Ibid*, p. 316
3. *Ibid*, p. 202

been quoted by us. Actually, we find a few references even in the other writings of Abul Fazl as, for example, in the *Akbar Nāmah* Akbar is described as enlisting thousands of disciples (*chelās*) to his new religion in the twenty-seventh year of his rule.[1] *Ā'in-i-Akbari* also mentions many thousand novices belonging to all classes.[2] These historians are never weary of praising Abul Fazl's catholicity and broadmindedness but conveniently forget that several historians who have studied Abul Fazl's writings have accused him of suppressing the truth[3] and warned 'against the prejudice which he draws on his favourites by his fawning fulsome adulation..., and against the suspicions which he excites by his dishonest way of telling a story, even in cases where the action related was innocent or excusable.'[4] Of a fact, no historian who is motivated or unsympathetic to Islam can be expected to make an assessment of the great harm done to the faith of the Prophet by Akbar's religious policies. These writers, however, acknowledge the fact that Akbar's religious policy was a complete failure and some have now began to realise that if Akbar had pursued the policy of religious neutrality, the complicated communal problem of India would have found a correct solution very long ago.[5]

In short, an inevitable outcome of Akbar's religious policy was that the monotheistic way of life and system of belief which had taken four hundred years' labour of the most virtuous and spiritually illuminated persons to take root in the country, were laid open to a comprehensive danger of religious, intellectual and cultural apostasy. The most powerful empire of its day was on the back of this aggression which

1. *Akbar Nāmah*, Vol. III, p. 558
2. *Āin-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 174
3. Beveridge's Introduction to the *Akbar Nāmah*, Vol. III, p. ix
4. Elliot in Introduction to *Akbar Nāmah*, *The History of India as told by its own Historians*, Vol. VI, p. 7
5. A. L. Srivastava, *Sher Shah and his Successors*

was being abetted by quite a few sharp-witted, learned and astute brains. If the shape of things had remained unchanged and no towering personality had come forward to stem the tide of un-Islamic current of thoughts and doctrines, the country would have in the eleventh century gone the way of the nineth century Islamic Andalusia, now known to the world as Spain, or it would have become a fore-runner of what happened in Turkistān after its conquest by Russia in the fourteenth century. But, as a poet has said: a man came from nowhere and did the feat.

I think it more befitting to close this chapter with the picturesque description of Islam's chequered career in India from the forceful pen of an erudite historian and scholar, Syed Sulaimān Nadwī:

> "A thousand years after the traveller had begun his journey, and after four hundred years passed over in slumber, a wizard coming from Irān in the reign of Akbar, whispered to the Emperor that the faith of the Prophet had come to the journey's end on the completion of its first millennium; and it was high time for an illiterate Emperor to replace the religion of the unlettered Prophet by his own *Din-i-Ilāhi*. The Magians lit the holy fire, the Christians rang the church bells, Brahmins bedecked the idols and the yoga and mysticism joined hands to illuminate the temple and mosque with the same light. Anybody desirous to get a glimpse of this multicoloured religion should go through the *Dabistān-i-Mazāhib*. He would see many a person with a rosary in his hand and a sacred thread round his neck; grandees prostrating before the Emperor, scholars servilely waiting upon the monarch and the sermoners telling the faithful in the mosque: *Glorified is He, Allāh-o-Akbar*.
>
> All this was going on when a caller from Sirhind called out, "Clear the way, he comes who has to walk the track." A renovator, a descendant of the Great Caliph

'Umar, appeared on the scene and this was Ahmad of Sirhind."[1]

1. Introduction to *Seerat Saiyid Ahmad Shahid*, Vol. I, pp. 30-31.

CHAPTER IV

MUJADDID ALF THANI

Family

Shaikh Ahmad was a direct descendant of Caliph 'Umar, with 31 intermediaries between the two. His pedigree confirmed from various sources[1] is as follows :

Shaikh Ahmad (Mujaddid Alf Thānī) b. Makhdūm 'Abdul Ahd b. Zainul 'Ābidīn, b. 'Abdul Ha'i b. Muhammad b. Habīb Ullah b. Imām Raf'ī-ud-dīn b. Nasīr-ud-dīn b. Sulaimūn b. Yūsuf b. Is'hāq b. 'Abdullah b. Shu'aib b. Ahmad b. Yūsuf b. Shihāb-ud-dın 'Alı Farrukh Shāh b. Nūr-ud-dın b. Nasır-ud-dīn b. Mahmūd b. Sulaimān b. Mas'ūd b. 'Abdullāh al-Wa'iz al-Asghar b. 'Abdullāh al-Wāiz. al-Akbar b. Abul Fath b. Is'hāq b.

1. A descendant of the Mujjaddid, Shāh Abul Hasan Zaid Farūqi has traced the genealogy in the *Muqāmat-i-Khair* (pp. 26-33) and taken pains to correct a few mistakes found in other sources. Others who have discussed the matter, and reached the same conclusion are Shāh Muhammad Hasan Mujaddidī of Sāin Dād, Sind, Mahmūd Ahmad Abbāsī and Ahmad Husain Khān. *Jawāhar-M'asūmī* by the last mentioned need be seen in this connexion.

Ibrahīm b. Nāsīr b. Abdullāh b. 'Umar b. Hafs b. 'Āsim b. 'Abdullah b. 'Umar.

Shihāb-ud-din 'Alī Farrukh Shāh who ruled over Kābul, has been mentioned as the fifteenth predecessor of Mujaddid in this genealogical table. His descendants included such luminaries as the well-known mystic Shaikh Bābā Farīd Ganj Shakar. Shaikh Nūr-ud-dīn, the grandson of Shaikh Nasīr-ud-dīn, was also a man distinguished for his learning and purity of spirit. However, little is known about others since hardly any biographical works save those written about the Mujaddid or his family seem to have been preserved.[1] Shihāb-ud-dīn Alī Farrukh Shāh had devoted his life to spread the light of Islam.

Shihāb-ud-dīn 'Ali Farrukh Shāh tried, on taking the helm after the death of his father, to make peace between the Mughals and the Afghāns. He possessed, besides authority, an illuminated heart and guided a large number of persons on the path of spiritual ascent. Shortly before he left this fleeting world, he abdicated in favour of his son Shaikh Yūsuf and withdrew himself to a gorge still known as Darra Farrukh Shāh, sixty miles to the north of Kābul, for leading a secluded life in the remembrance of God. He died there and his grave still exists in that valley.

Shaikh Yūsuf took the lessons in spiritual discipline from his father. Just and God-fearing, he proved his worth as a capable and popular suzerain, but he was also smitten, like his father, with the love of God. He held dear to his heart what Rūmī has beautifully indited in one of his couplets.

Mastership of the World! 'tis lawful for the worshipers of moulding;
I am serf to the King of love, ever abiding.

He also renounced the crown before the end of his life's journey, handing it over to his son Ahmad who was, however,

1. Like *Zubdatul-Muqāmāt; Hazarāt-ul-Quds*, etc.
2. *Zubdatul-Muqāmāt*, pp. 88-89

also a mendicant in the royal garb. He, too, was so attracted by the love Divine that he gave up all, wealth and autority and bade his sons to keep only a little for their sustenance and distribute the rest of their belongings among the poor and the needy. After taking his initial lessons on the path of spirit from his own father this prince learnt at the feet of the renowned sūfī Shaikh Shihāb-ud-dīn Suhrwardī, and was honoured with the mantle of his spiritual successorship.

This tradition was maintained by the successors of Shaikh Yūsuf and Ahmad who always had themselves aligned with a spiritual mentor of one or the other recognised schools. Several of them made considerable progress on the path of mysticism.

Imām Raf'ī-ud-dīn, who was ninth in the line of descent of Shaikh Shihāb-ud-dīn Farrukh Shāh and sixth predecessor of the Mujaddid, was, as stated in the *Zubdatul-Muqāmāt*, a man of learning as well as an eminent sūfī. Imām Rafī-ud-dīn being a disciple of Saiyid Jalāl-ud-dīn of Bukhārā, popularly known as the Makhdūm Jahāniān Jahān Gasht (d. 785/1383), would have lived during the closing decades of the eighth century or even in the opening years of the ninth one also. He was the first among the Mujaddid's ancestors who emigrated from Kābul to India and took up residence at Sirhind, then called Sahrind. The place was then a forest frequented by wild beasts. There being no habitation between Sāmānah and Sarhind great difficulty was felt in transferring imperial imposts from one place to another. The inhabitants of the surrounding district specially Sarayas, lying at a distance of 6 or 7 *coses*,[1] requested Shaikh Makhdūm Jahāniān to obtain the approval of Sultān Fīroz Shāh for the establishment of a town in the area. The Sultān agreed to the suggestion of Makhdūm and entrusted the job to Khwājā Fathullah, the elder brother of Imām Raf'ī-ud-dīn, who came to Sirhind with a force of two thousand cavalry and got a fort constructed there. Shaikh

1. A *cose* measures about two miles

Makhdūm Jahāniān got the foundation stone of the fort laid by his spiritual successor Imām Raf'ī-ud-dīn, who had settled down at Sunnām, and whom he directed to move on to the new city. Thus the family of Mujaddid came to settle down in Sirhind where it still resides.[1] The fort and the city are reported to have been founded in 760/1359.[2]

Sirhind had thus been a populous city for two hundred years before the birth of the Mujaddid.[3] Other biographical accounts show that Sirhind was the home-town of several other families with scholarly traditions, some of whose scions were noted literati.[4] However, it seems that Sirhind became a centre of Islamic learning in the beginning of the tenth century of Hijra for we seldom find any man of letters, save in the family of the Mujaddid, during the eighth and ninth centuries. In the tenth century, on the other hand, several noted

1. *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*, pp. 89-90
2. Sirhind was once the chief town of district Sutlej. The Chinese traveller Hiuen-Tsang who came to India in the seventh century has mentioned the city. He says that gold is mined near it. Of the two syllables of its name, *seh* in Hindi means lion and *ind* stands for forest. It also marked, in the bygone times, the limit of the Ghaznavid empire in India and that is why it came to be known as Sir-hind or Sahrind. Muhammad Ghori captured Sirhind in 587/1191 but it does not seem to have attracted the attention of its rulers until the time Firūz Shāh Tughluq ascended the throne. Instead, Sāmānah was regarded as the chief town of the area. The city continued to attract attention since the time of Firūz Shāh Tughluq when it was raised to the level of provincial governorship. Its strategic importance was also recognised by Bābur who visited the place several times. Humāyūn also came to Sirhind before recapturing Delhi. The city was a populous town during the Mughal rule; 360 mosques besides a large number of wells, *sirāis* and mausoleums are reported to have existed in the town. *(Dāiratul Ma'ārif Islāmiyah)*
3. Mujaddid has praised Sirhind for its serenity. Letter No. 22 of the *Maktūbāt*, Vol. II.
4. Yahyā b. Ahmad author of the *Tārikh Mubārak Shāhī*, written about 838/1435, calls himself Assihar-hindī.

scholars and pedagogues are seen engaged in teaching and preaching at Sirhind. Alādād b. Sālih Sirhindī (d. 927/1521) was the foremost in this galaxy of scholars, while others were Sher 'Alī Qādiri (d. 985/1577). 'Ali Sher[1] (d. 985/1577), Muftī Ahmad Sirhindī (d. 986/1578), Ibrāhīm Sirhindī (d. 994/1586), and 'Abdullah Niāzī Mahdawī[2] (d. 1000/1592). A few more noted scholars who find a mention in the historical and biographical works, but whose years of death are not known, were 'Abdul Qādir, the teacher of Makhdūm-ul-Mulk Mullā Abdullah of Sultānpūr, 'Abdus Samad Husainī, Amān Ullah, Qutb-ud-din and Madj-ud-din. The last mentioned was known for his encyclopaedic knowledge whom Bābur met at Sirhind and paid his compliments. We find two more men of letters, Mīr 'Alī and Badr-ud-din Sirhindī, mentioned by the historians.[3]

Makhdūm Shaikh 'Abdul Ahad

Khwājā Muhammad Hāshim Kashmi has given a bit detailed account of Makhdūm Shaikh Ābdul Ahad in the *Zubdat-ul-Muqāmāt.* He spent three years with the Mujaddid and has given a first hand description of the sayings and doings of the Makhdūm based either on his own experiences or learnt from the Mujaddid or from the sons of the Mujaddid. His accounts can, therefore, be taken as an authentic description of the Makhdum's life.

While Shaikh 'Abdul Ahad was engaged in acquiring knowledge he was overcome by religious ecstasy and, forsaking his studies, attached himself as a disciple to the famous sage Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs of Gangoh. He acquired some of the excellences of the path of spirit from his mentor but when he

1. It is difficult to say whether Sher 'Ali Qādirī and 'Ali Sher were the names of the same person. The *Gulzār-i-Abrār* and *Nuzhatul Khawātir* give their names as mentioned here.
2. It is reported that he abjured Mahadawī faith towards the end of his life.
3. *Nuzhatul Khawātir,* Vol. IV, gives an account of the achievements of all these scholars.

expressed the wish to remain in his attendance for the rest of his life, his learned teacher directed him to complete his formal education. He said, "Mendicity without knowledge has little merit." As Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs was already too old, 'Abdul Ahad submitted, "I doubt if I would be blessed with your company after completing my education." The Shaikh replied, "If I am not alive by then, attach yourself to my son Rukn-ud-dīn for spiritual ascent." 'Abdul Ahad acted on the advice of his venerable mentor and went away to complete his education.

By the time 'Abdul Ahad completed his studies, Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs had already left the world for his heavenly abode. He spent some time in paying visits to different mystics of the time but ultimately returned to Shaikh Rukn-ud-dīn from whom he acquired both inward and outward perfection of spirit and obtained permission to enlist disciples as his spiritual successor.[1]

Both Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs and Shaikh Rukn-ud-dīn were overcome by a mysterious longing after God and often remained in ecstatic transports. Both took recourse to musical recitations. Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs, although a meticulous follower of the prophetic *sunnah*, was also a great expounder of the doctrine of the Unity of Being. He followed the path of poverty and self-effacement, practised austerities, spent much of his time in prayers and recollection of God and was never unmindful of his last journey.[2]

Makhdūm 'Abdul Ahad had also been attached, in addition to Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs and Shaikh Rukn-ud-dīn, to a Qādiriyah mystic Shaikh Kamāl of Kaithal who was regarded as one of the venerable mystics or his time.[3] Makhdūm 'Abdul Ahad used to

1. The certificate of permission awarded by Shaikh Rukn-ud-dīn to Shaikh Abdul Ahad has been copied in the *Zubdatul-Maqāmāt*.
2. For an account of his saintly life see the *Zubdatul-Maqāmāt* by Khwājā Muhammad Hāshim Kashmī, pp. 97-101 and the *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. IV
3. For details see *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. IV

say; "Seen through the inward eye of spirit, one can seldom reckon the exalted station of Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir Jilānī, the founder of the Qādiriyah order." Shāh Kamāl's grandson, Shāh Sikandar had also attained higher stages of spirituality. Makhdūm 'Abdul Ahad benefited from his company also.

After completing his formal education, Makhdūm 'Abdul Ahad went round a number of places in search of men purer in spirit but he had also pledged to himself that he would have nothing to do with any one who indulged in actions disallowed by the *shari'ah*. He met, during his wanderings, Shaikh Allādād of Rohtās and Muhammad b. Fakhr, the author of the *Tauzih ul-Hawāshī*. He also attended the lectures of the latter scholar. He repaired to Bengal and thence to Jaunpūr where he spent a few days with Syed 'Ali Qawwām, popularly known as 'Alī 'Āshiqān. He returned to Sirhind, never to leave the place again. He was a gifted teacher who lectured on all the subjects then included in the curriculum for higher studies. As Mudjadid once remarked, he was well-versed in all the sciences and there were few who could rival him in the law and jurisprudence. The jurisprudence of Hanafite school was his favourite subject whose depth and wisdom he would expatiate in a way that spoke of the greatness of Imām Abū Hanīfah. He also taught *tasawwuf* or mysticism, and expounded the intricate points of the *T'arruf*, *'Awārif-ul-Ma'ārif* and *Fusūs al-Hikam* to the satisfaction of his students.

By his own inclination and experiences he took Ibn 'Arabi's mystical doctrine for granted but had an equally great respect for the *shari'ah* and never uttered a word which could be construed as violating it in letter or spirit. He was utterly selfless, never allowed his students to minister to his personal needs, took meticulous care to follow the *sunnah* even in trivial matters like eating and dressing and never felt weary of undergoing any hardship in fulfilment of the demands of *shari'ah*. He had pledged allegiance to the Shaikhs of Chishtiyah and Qādiriyah orders, but being sincere a seeker after truth he always

expressed desires to know more about the Naqshbandiyah order and often remarked: 'May God bring it to my country', or 'would that I reached the centre of that noble order'. He was also a penman who had written the *Kunūz-ul-Haqā'iq* and the *Asrār-ut-Tashahhud*.[1]

Mujaddid relates that he had often heard his father saying that the love of the Prophet's household was a guarantee to one's faith. He further says that when the Makhdūm was about to depart from this world, he reminded him of his remark and got the reply: "Praise be to God. I am already drenched in that love and virtue."

Earlier, when the Makhdūm was wandering in search of godly souls, he had once to stay for a short while at Sikandra.[2] Impressed by his moral rectitude and beauty of holiness, a noble resident of the town had given him his daughter in marriage. All the sons of the Makhdūm were born of that wedlock.

Makhdūm 'Abdul Ahad had been blessed with seven sons like his spiritual mentor. We know the names of a few only: Shāh Muhammad, Shaikh Muhammad Mas'ūd, Shaikh Ghulām Muhammad, Shaikh Maudūd[3] and two more of their brothers of whom one was the Mujaddid. All of them were learned and underwent severe discipline in the way of holy endeavour.

The Makhdūm died at the age of eighty years on the 17th of Rajab, 1007.[4] His grave is in Sirhind, about a mile to the

1. Khwajā Muhammad Hāshim Kashmī has given a few extracts from the *Asrar-ut-Tashahhud* and also a number of sayings of the Makhdūm as related by the Mujaddid. (pp. 118—122).
2. The author of the *Zubdatul Muqāmāt* says that the town was near Etawah in the present Uttar Pradesh.
3. Mujaddid's collection of letters has a few letters addressed to Shaikh Ghulām Muhammad and Shaikh Maudūd.
4. 3rd February, 1599. *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*, p. 122. Certain writers have given the date as 27th Jamādul Ākhīr (16th January, 1599) but there is no difference of opinion about the year of death.

west of the city.[1]

The Makhdūm was an outstanding representative of an earnest seeker after truth with a great respect for the *sunnah* and the *sharī'ah*. He also practised severe austerities and strivings in the path of holiness. These qualities were inherited by his son who was destined to take under his wings the treasure of Islam in India and illuminate the whole country with the Divine light bestowed to him.

Birth and Childhood of Mujaddid

Shaikh Ahmad was born in Friday night, the 14th of Shawwāl, 971[2] at Sirhind. From his early childhood he showed the signs of a virtuous disposition.

One of his father's spiritual guide Shāh Kamāl was a godly soul. He was specially attached to the young Ahmad and showed a keen interest in his upbringing. Shāh Kamāl died when the Mujaddid was only seven years of age. The graphic description of Shāh Kamāl's features by the Mujaddid and the house where he last paid a visit to the Shāh in the company of his father is a fine example of the Mujaddid's retentive memory.

Mujaddid began his education by memorising the Qur'ān and learnt it by heart in a few years. Thereafter he started receiving instruction from his father and soon showed the signs of possessing a keen and assimilative mind. After finishing the first phase of his education with his father and certain other teachers of the place, he went to Siālkot which was a well known centre of learning in those days. There he underwent schooling under Maulānā Kamāl of Kashmir who was a renowned teacher of logic, philosophy, scholastics and jurisprudence and had the honour of being a teacher of such an eminent scholar as 'Allama 'Abdul Hakīm of Siālkot. Mujaddid

1. *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*, p. 122
2. 26th May, 1564

studied some of the higher books like the *'Azodī*, included in the curriculum of higher studies in those days from Maulānā Kamāl and the *hadīth* from Shaikh Y'aqūb of Kāshmīr. The latter known as a grammarian had been a disciple of Shaikh Shihāb-ud-din Ahmad b. Hajar Haitmī of Mecca who had been an undisputed authority on his subject and had written a commentary on the *Sahīh* of Bukhārī. Shaikh Y'aqūb was then regarded as the most learned scholar of *hadīth* for he had also received instruction from such scholars as Shaikh 'Abdur Rahmān b. Fahd and Qāzī Bāhlol of Badakhshān. He is reported to have completed his education at the age of seventeen years.

The Mujaddid started his career as a teacher after gaining a thorough knowledge of the religious and secular sciences. He also wrote a few tracts like the *Risālah Tahlīliyah* and the *Risalah Radd Mazhāb Shī'a* in Persian and Arabic. He also went to Agra, then known as Akbarābād, where he came in contact with Faizī and Abul Fazl. He could not, however, make himself comfortable with the two brothers because of the differences of opinion with them. Once Mujaddīd showed his displeasure at certain blasphamous remarks of Abul Fazl and ceased meeting him. Abul Fazl later on sent for the Mujaddid but he excused himself and never went to see him again. This was the time when Faizī was busy in writing his commentary on the Qur'ān entirely in words which contained no dotted letters. Once when he had a difficulty in finding an undotted word to continue his work, he consulted the Mujaddid who solved his difficulty. Faizī open-heartedly acknowledged the wit and learning of the Mujaddid.

Mujaddid prolonged his stay at Agra. He returned to Sirhind when his father came to see him at the capital. During their journey back to home, Shaikh Sultān, the Governor of Thānesar warmly received both the father and son and treated them as his guests. Shaikh Sultān was so impressed by Mujaddid that he offered to give his daughter in marriage to him. The matrimonial relationship was approved by Mujaddid's

father and thus he came back to his home along with his wife.

Spiritual Allegiance to Khwājā Bāqī Billāh

The philosophical and doctrinal aspects of Islamic mysticism, which have already been discussed in the first volume of the *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, need not be repeated here. The accounts of Khwājā Hasan Basrī, Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir Jīlānī and Maulānā Jalāl-ud-dīn Rūmī throw sufficient light on these issues which have also been touched upon in describing the achievements of two eminent mystics of India in the second volume of these series.

It would suffice to add here that the times in which the Mujaddid had to take ahead his reformatory work, mystical discipline had broadened to become a popular movement in the Indian Muslim society. No scholar could exert a powerful appeal among the elite or even the common folk unless he had undergone schooling under some eminent mystic of a recognised sufī order. Apart from it, nobody could have called the people to betake the path of virtue or reform their morals merely by being a profound teacher or a fluent speaker. Any attempt to give a call for reform and renovation in those times without any spiritual attainment would have been analogus to inviting an armed conflict without possessing the munitions of war. It was necessary for the Mujaddid or, perhaps, an arrangement made by divine dispensation that he was first led to the path of spirit and thus enabled, under the tutelage of some of the most virtuous men of God to acquire the excellence and perfection of the spiritual realm. All this was necessary for the great task he was about to undertake and to leave his indelible mark on the Muslim society spread over a substantially large portion of the world to the end of time.

Mujaddid prolonged his stay at Sirhind till his father's death, attaining the higher reaches of Chishtiyah and Qādiriyah orders under his guidance. He also engaged himself in literary pursuits during that period.

This was the time when Mujaddid was pining for *haj* and paying a visit to the city of the Prophet, but he did not consider it proper to embark on the long journey leaving his old father nearing his end. His father died in 1007/1599, and a year after that in 1008/1600 he left his home for pilgrimage. When he arrived in Delhi, several scholars of the city who were already aware of his literary attainments called upon him. One of these scholars was Maulānā Hasan of Kashmir who had already been introduced to him earlier. Maulānā Hasan told him about Khwājā Bāqī Billāh, a Shaikh of the Naqshbandiyah order, who had arrived in Delhi a few days earlier, and was known to have been endowed with both inward and outward perfection. The Mujaddid having already heard about the merits of Naqshbandiyah order, expressed his desire to meet the Shaikh. He called upon Khwājā Bāqī Billāh in the company of Maulānā Hasan.[1]

Shaikh 'Abdul Bāqī (Khwājā Bāqī Billāh)

Before we proceed further it seems proper to give here a resume of the spiritual attainments of Khwājā Baqī Billāh as described in the *Nuzhatul Khwatir*.[2] His name was Razī-ud-dīn 'Abul Mowayyad 'Abdul Bāqī b. 'Abdus Salām of Badakhshān. Popularly known as Khwājā Bāqī Billāh of Kābul, he had migrated to Delhi and was a profound sage presenting the picture of the Quranic verse: *"We have not created the jinn and man save for Our worship"*. Excelling in devotion, piety and holy endeavour, he was the very crucible of devotion to God emitting the brilliance of love divine. Born about 971-72 A.H.,[3]

1. The Mujaddid, as his letters show, ever remained grateful to Maulānā Hasan for introducing him to Khwājā Bāqī Billāh (*See* letter No. 279 of Volume I).
2. *ef.*, Vol. V. Shah Walī Ullah Dehlawī's *Al-Intibāh fi Salāsil Awliya' Allāh* and the *Ham'āt* may be seen for the biographical accounts of Khwājā Bahā'-ud-din Naqshband, the founder of Naqshbandiyah order.
3. 1563-64 A. D.

at Kābul, he took Maulānā Muhammad Sādiq Halwā'i as his teacher and accompanied him in his tour to Transoxania. There he set his heart on betaking the path of spirit and terminated his education to call upon the mystic Shaikhs of the area. First of all, he enlisted himself as a disciple of Shaikh Khwājā 'Ubaid, a spiritual successor to Maulānā Lutf Ullah. Aspiring to attain the highest reaches of divine truth, he took Shaikh Iftikhār and then Amīr 'Abdullāh of Balakh as his spiritual guides but was not satisfied till he was drawn in a mysterious manner to Khwājā Bahā'ud-dīn Naqshband, who created in him an inclination to follow the path of mysticism requiring strict observance of the holy law. After some time he came to Kashmir and met Shaikh Bābā Kubrawī in whose company he acquired excellence and perfection of spirit. It is reported that during this period of his complete absorption in God, the unveiling of an stage that the mystics call *fanā* or extinction was experienced by him. Khwāja Baqī Billāh again took to scouring the country for another spiritual mentor after the death of Shaikh Bābā Kubrawī. During his travels he had a vision of Khwājā 'Ubaid Ullah Ahrār from whom he learnt the secrets of the Naqshbandiyah order. Thereafter Khwājā Baqī Billāh took the road to the region of Transoxania where he was granted leave by Shaikh Muhammad Amkankī to practice the Naqshbandiyah discipline and also to enlist disciples in that order only after three days' stay with him. Khwājā Bāqī Billāh returned to India, stayed for a year at Lahore where he met the scholars of the town, then he came down to Delhi and took up residence in the fort of Fīroz Shāh. The fort had, in those days, a spacious mosque and a wide canal running besides it. Khwāja Bāqī Billāh continued to live at this place until the end of his life's journey.

Being inflamed with the love of God, Khwājā Bāqī Billāh often gave way to transports of ecstatic raptures but he always tried to conceal his spiritual excellence from others owing to his temperamental modesty. If any one asked him to act as

his spiritual guide, he normally advised him to seek someone else perfect in spirit since he was himself devoid of it, and also to let him know about that attracted soul. Even if he agreed to guide anyone on the path of spiritual perfection he did so quietly without letting the novice know about it. On occasions when he had to explain an abstruse point, he gave a most eloquent dissertation on it. He insisted on his friends not to stand up in his honour, always treated them as his equals and often seated himself with others on the ground out of courteous humility.

The Khwājā had been endowed with a mysterious spirituality. On whomsoever he cast a momentary look, the man felt himself attracted to God. He had a tender heart which melted at the slightest sight of misery to a sentient being. Once in a wintery night he left his bed for a short while and found on return a cat sleeping under his quilt. Instead of making the cat leave his bed, he remained sitting for the whole night. Similarly, once he happend to be present in Lahore during a period of drought. He could hardly eat anything during that period and distributed whatever victuals were brought to him among the poor. Once on his return journey from Lahore to Delhi, he got down from his horse on coming across a handicapped man who was not able to walk. The Khwājā got him seated on his horse and took him to his destination before resuming his journey. At the same time, he put a cloth across his face so that nobody could recognise him. He never hesitated in owning his mistake nor ever pretended to be superior to anyone whether he was a friend or a stranger.

It is related that one of his neighbours, a young man, was a malefactor but the Khwājā always bore patiently with him. After some time Khwājā Hosām-ud-din, one of the Khwājā's disciples, lodged a complaint against that rascal with the authorities and he was put behind the bars. When Khwājā Bāqī Billāh came to know of the incident, he chided Khwājā Hosām-ud-din who submitted, "Sire, he is a wicked trouble-maker." The

Khwājā replied with a sigh, "Why not, you are all virtuous fellows who perceived this vileness but I do not find myself better than him. That is why I never lodged any complaint against him." Thereafter the Khwājā used his good offices to get the man released from gaol who repented of his sins and left his evil ways.

If one of the Khwājā's disciples committed a mistake, he always attributed it to himself saying that it was really his weakness which found an expression through his disciple.

In matters relating to worship of God and the dealings with his fellow-beings, the Khwājā used to exercise every possible precaution. It is related that he was accustomed to recite the *sūrah Fātiha* during the congregational prayers, since there were several *ahādīth* enjoining its recital even behind the Imām, until he was convinced that it was not necessary.

These instances present just a glimpse of the Khwājā's sterling virtues since his greatness can really be measured from the number of persons who got spiritual enlightenment through him within the extremely short period of his stay in India. The Naqshbandiyah order was propagated and made popular by him in this country. There were hardly few persons in India who knew anything about it prior to him.[1]

Shaikh Muhammad b. Fazl Ullah of Burhānpūr says that the Khwājā was incomparable in the effectiveness of his exhortations and sermons inasmuch as he succeeded in spreading his mystical order within a short period of three or four years

1. The Naqshbandiyah order reached India through two mystics. One of these was Amir Abul 'Alā of Akbarābād, nephew and spiritual successor of Abdullah Ahrārī, who had permission of his uncle to take disciples, but his method combined the disciplines of the Naqshbandiyah and Chishtiyah orders. Its centres were Kālpi, Mārehra, Dānāpūr and a few other places. The second mystic was Khwājā Bāqī Billāh. From India it spread to other countries of the Muslim world through the efforts of his disciples. (Maulana 'Abdul Ha'ī, *As-Thaqāfāt-ul-Islāmiyah-fil Hind.)*

throughout the length and breadth of the land. Mullā Hāshim Kashmī writes in the *Zubdatul Muqāmāt* that the Khwājā died at an early age of forty years. He remained in India only for four years but he guided, within this short period, his friends and disciples to the acme of spiritual perfection who made the Naqshbandiyah order so popular that it overcame all other mystical orders prevalent in the country.

Muhammad b. Fazl Ullah Muhibbī writes in the *Khulāsatul-Āthār* that the Shaikh was a sign and a light and a prince of the knowers of God, endowed with both inward and outward perfection and a worker of miracles.[1] He was so unassuming and courteous that he never tried to take precedence over others. He even forbade his colleagues to stand up in deference to him and asked them to treat him as one of their equals.

Muhibbī further says that the Khwājā was a worker of miracles and wonders. Even if someone was disinterested in the ways of the spirit, no sooner did the Khwaja lay his eyes upon him than he felt irresistibly attracted towards him and entered in his fold of discipleship. Very often persons distracted with the grief of a longing after God seated themselves at his door. Many among his disciples were blessed with the vision of divine truths, in a mysterious way, soon after pledging spiritual allegiance to him.

Khwājā Bāqi Billāh's disciples included such illustrious men of God as the Mujaddid, Shaikh Tāj-ud-dīn b. Sultān Uthmāni of Sambhal, Shaikh Hosām-ud-dīn b. Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn of Badakhshān and Shaikh Allādād of Delhi.

His writings consist of several tracts on mysticism, letters and poetic compositions. In the *Silsilatul Ahrār* he has given

1. *M'ujiza* is the miracle worked by a prophet of God while the miraculous acts of the saints and illuminated souls are known as *karāmāt and tasarrufāt*. Both are worked by the leave of God but the latter have a place definitely inferior to that brought about by the apostles of God. In English there are, however, no words to express the difference between the two.

an exposition of his mystical quatrains.

The Khwājā died on 14th Jamāda-ul-Ākhir, 1014 A.H.[1] at the age of forty years and four months and was buried at Qadam Rasūl in western Delhi where his grave is still visited by people in large numbers.

Mujaddid's initiation in the Khwaja's order

The Mujaddid was received warmly by Khwājā Bāqī Billāh when the former called upon him for initiation in his spiritual order. Ordinarily the Khwājā never showed any interest in enrolling novices for spiritual training but his treatment of the Mujaddid suggested as if he had been awaiting his arrival. Of a fact, the Mujaddid was to become the chief propounder of the Khwājā's spiritual order in India and to renovate the spiritual climate then obtaining in the country by bringing the then liberal mystic thoughts and practices within the orthodox confines of the *sharī'ah*. Thus, deviating from his usual practice, the Khwājā asked the Mujaddid to extend his stay with him for a month or so as his guest.

When the Khwājā was thinking of coming to India a parrot is stated to have perched on his hand. When the Khwājā narrated the incident to his spiritual mentor Khwājā Amkankī, he replied that parrot being an Indian bird the Khwājā would guide some one in India on the path of spirit who would illuminate the entire world.[2]

The Mujaddid accepted the invitation of Khwājā Baqī Billāh and prolonged his stay with the latter to one and a half months. He was so impressed by the Khwājā that he expressed the desire to be enrolled as a disciple for undergoing the Naqshbandiyah discipline. The Khwājā, after enrolling the Mujaddid in his spiritual order, advised him to practise the silent remembrance. The Mujaddid covered the path of spirit

1. 17th October, 1605 A.D.
2. *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*, pp. 140-141

with vigorous strides and acquired knowledge of esoteric secrets of the order so quickly that the Khwājā was led to believe that the Mujaddid answered the providential sign of Indian parrot who would renovate and revive the faith in India. Thus, within the short period of his stay with Khwājā Bāqī Billāh, the Mujaddid acquired perfection in outward and inward knowledge and was rewarded with a speedy ascent from one stage to another in the realm of spirit difficult to be expressed in words.[1]

The Mujaddid then returned to Sirhind but only when he was assured by Khwājā Bāqī Billāh that he had fully imbibed the Naqshbandiyah doctrine. The Khwājā also expressed the hope that the Mujaddid would make steady progress in attaining the proximity of divine essence. On his second visit to Delhi the Mujaddid obtained from his spiritual guide permission to impart instruction and to perfect disciples in the Naqshbandiyah order. The Khwājā also gave him permission to impart spiritual training to a few of his own disciples.

After some time the Mujaddid paid the third and the last visit to Khwājā Bāqī Billāh. The Khwājā came out of his house to receive him, gave him certain happy tidings and accorded him the honour of acting as the chief guide at a meeting of mystics engaged in devotions. The Khwājā also instructed his disciples that they ought to direct their attentions to the Mujaddid for spiritual guidance. Before bidding farewell to the Mujaddid, the Khwājā said, "I feel too weak now and do not expect to live for long." The Khwājā also asked the Mujaddid to apply his mind upon the spiritual training of his two sons, Khwājā 'Ubaid Ullah and Khwājā 'Abd Ullah, who were still young, and also to meditate in a similar manner for the well being of his wives in absentia. It is reported that the

1. Any one desirous to pursue the matter should go through the Mujaddid's letter No. 296 (Vol. I, Section IV) to Khwājā 'Ubaid Ullah and Khwājā 'Abd Ullah, the sons of Khwājā Bāqī Billāh, and letter No. 290 (Vol. I, Section V) to Maulānā Muhammad Hāshim Kashmī.

Mujaddid's meditation was instantly rewarded with fruitful results.[1]

The Khwājā later on wrote in a letter to one of his friends, "Shaikh Ahmad who belongs to Sirhind is a man of great learning and piety. He has lived for a few days with this mendicant who has witnessed his wonderful qualities and attainments. I hope that he would one day illuminate the whole world. I am fully convinced of his spiritual perfection."

The Mujaddid, on his part, felt assured from the day he had been led on the path of spirit by his mentor that he would one day attain the highest stage of the discipline. At the same time, he had no doubt that all his attainments were attributable to his guide. He often used to recite the verses which said :—

The light I am getting from your heart on mine,
Assures me that my spirit will unite with thine.

Neither learning nor spiritual attainment of the Mujaddid ever stood in the way of his showing greatest honour to the Khwājā. If Khwājā Bāqī Billāh ever sent for him, the complexion of his face would turn pale and he would appear visibly agitated.[2] The Khwājā, on the other hand, always spoke so highly of the Mujaddid as few spiritual guides have seldom commended their disciples. Once, it is reported, he remarked about the Mujaddid: "Shaikh Ahmad is the sun whose brilliance steals the light of innumerable stars like us."[3]

1. *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*, p. 155.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 149
3. *Ibid.*, p. 330

CHAPTER V

MUJADDID AS A SPIRITUAL GUIDE

Stay at Sirhind

After completing the probationary period with Khwājā Bāqī Billāh, the Mujaddid withdrew to the seclusion of his house in Sirhind subjecting himself to the severe discipline of spiritual exercises. For a long time he kept his doors closed to all those who came to seek his spiritual guidance. He felt reluctant to act as their spiritual mentor since he was himself making a rapid progress on the path of inward perfection which did not allow him to divert his attention to the guidance and training of others. A recession (*nuzūl*) from transports of religious ecstasy was needed for imparting training to others and hence he hardly felt inclined to it. In a letter written during this period, he remarked: "I was conscious of this shortcoming and so I called for all the students and disciples to tell them about my diffidence in this regard, but they took it as my humility and continued to pin their faith in me until the Gracious God settled me in the (*ahwāl-i-muntazirah*) state of expectancy."[1]

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 290.

The Mujaddid began, at last, accepting disciples in his order and guiding them on the path of spiritual illumination. He used to keep the Khwājā informed of his own spiritual experiences as well as the states and stages attained by his disciples. His writings of the period show that his progress on the path of inward perfection was leading him to the fulfilment of divine will, that is, accomplishment of those immensely important tasks which were to prove beneficial to the faith.[1] The Mujaddid was only once to meet his spiritual mentor during this period after which he had no opportunity to see him again.

Journey to Lahore

The Mujaddid undertook the journey to Lahore, at the instance of the Khwājā, after a brief stay at Sirhind. Lahore was then the *second largest intellectual and religious centre of India* because of the large number of scholars and men of God living in that city. The Mujaddid was warmly received by the divines and scholars of Lahore,[2] some of whom even entered the fold of his spiritual order.[3] Maulānā Tāhir was one of those who bound themselves to the Mujaddid's spiritual allegiance and later rose to become his chief successor. Other notable persons enlisting themselves as the Mujaddid's disciples were Maulānā Hājī Muhammad and Maulānā Jamāl-ud-din Talwī. We find Mujaddid and his friends at Lahore having frequent seances for meditation or recital of God's praises.

The news about Khwāja Bāqī Billāh's death was received by Mujaddid while he was still in Lahore. Extremely agitated

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. II, No. 74
2. *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*, p. 157
3. *Ibid.*, p. 158. *Rauzatul Qayyūmiah* mentions the names of a few other persons like Khān Khānān and Murtaza Khān (also known as Saiyid Farīd) who took oath of allegiance to the Mujaddid while he was on his way to Lahore.

and disturbed, he set out for Delhi immediately. He went straight to Delhi, bypassing Sirhind, and paid a visit to his mentor's grave. The Mujaddid prolonged his stay at Delhi to console the bereaved members of the Khwājā's family which also helped to infuse a new spirit in the late Khwājā's disciples.[1]

The Mujaddid then returned to Sirhind. Thereafter he had an occasion to visit Delhi only once and made two or three trips to Agra. Then, during the last few years of his life he happened to pass through a few more cities with the troops escorting the Emperor. Wherever the Khwājā went, people seeking spiritual guidance flocked round him to derive benefit from his company.[2]

Arrangements for Moral Regeneration

The Mujaddid despatched several of his spiritual successors in 1026/1617 to different cities for moral and spiritual uplift of the people. A batch of 70 persons headed by Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim was sent to Turkistān; Maulānā Farrukh Husain with forty persons was deputed to Arabia, Yemen, Syria and Turkey; ten of his disciples under the leadership of Maulānā Muhammad Sādiq of Kābul were sent on a spiritual mission towards Kāshghar; and Maulānā Shaikh Ahmad Barkī along with 30 disciples were commissioned to preach his message in Turān, Badakhshān and Khurāsān. All these deputies of the Mujaddid carried out their mission successfully and brought about moral uplift of innumerable people.[3]

The result of these reformative endeavours was that several divines and scholars of mark and distinction came from far-flung areas to Sirhind in order to seek guidance from the Mujaddid. These distinguished men included Shaikh Tāhir of Badakhshān, a close confidant and courtier of the king of Badakhshān, and

1. *Zubdatul-Muqāmāt*, p. 158
2. *Ibid.*, p. 159
3. *Rauzatul Qayyūmiyah*, pp. 166-67

the reputed scholars like Shaikh 'Abdul Haq of Shādmān, Maulānā Sālih Kolābī, Shaikh Ahmad Barsī, Maulānā Yār Mohammad and Maulānā Yūsuf. Most of the scholars and divines coming from afar were allowed to enter the fold of Mujaddid's spiritual paternity, led to the path of spiritual perfection and then sent back to the places whence they had come for reformation and moral regeneration of the local population.[1]

The Mujaddid also deputed a number of his disciples for spreading his message of reform to different parts of the country. Mīr Muhammad N'omān, whom the Mujaddid had given permission to impart religious instruction and to perfect disciples as his deputy; was sent to Deccan. His cloister was daily visited by hundreds of troops, both infantrymen and cavalry, for meditation and the service of *zikr*. Shaikh Bad'i-ud-dīn of Sahāranpūr, another deputy of the Mujaddid, was first sent to Sahāranpūr and then commissioned to preach in Agra's military station. He attained such a popularity that thousands of men enlisted in the Imperial army including higher officers entered in his fold of spiritual tutelage. Such a throng of common people used to surround him that the nobles found it difficult to gain access to him. Another disciple of the Mujaddid, Mīr Muhammad N'omān Kashmī, who had obtaind permission to impart spiritual guidance from Khwājā Bāqī Billāh, was deputed to Burhānpūr. His sterling piety won the admiration of the local populace and led them to reform their lives and morals. Shaikh Tāhir of Lahore and Shaikh Nūr Muhammad of Patna were sent to their home towns where they guided a large number of men on the path of virtue and piety. Shaikh Hāmid was deputed to Bengal after he had attained inward perfection of spirit. Shaikh Tāhir of Badakhshān was asked to go to Jaunpūr for guidance of the people there. Maulānā Ahmad Barkī was deputed to Bark who also kept the Mujaddid informed about

1. *Rauzatul Qayyūmiah*, pp. 128-29 ard *Hazarātul Quds*, pp. 299-368

the spiritual progress of his disciples. Shaikh 'Abdul Ha'ī, who belonged to Hisār Shādmān in Asphahān and had compiled the second volume of the *Maktūbāt*, was sent to Patna. He founded a cloister in the heart of the city for the guidance of the populace while Shaikh Nūr Muhammad took up his residence by the side of river Ganges in Patna to spread the message of religious reform and renovation. Another man sent to his own home town was Shaikh Hasan of Bark. Saiyid Muhib Ullah of Mānikpūr was invested with the mantle of successorship and then directed to carry on the reformatory work in his town. Later on he obtained the permission of the Mujaddid to move on to Allāhābād. Shaikh Karīm-ud-dīn Bābā Hasan Abdālī was also guided to attain spiritual perfection and allowed to return to his home for imparting the message of divine proximity to the people.[1] Thus, before the year 1027/1618 drew to a close, the name and fame of the Mujaddid had reached the lands far off from India and people had started coming from different countries for undergoing mystical discipline under him. Mujaddid's deputies had already established themselves in Transoxania, Badakhshān, Kābul and several other cities and towns and his message had reached even the Arab countries. There was hardly a town in India where his deputies or spiritual successors were not inviting people to the straight path of Islam and virtuous mode of life.

Attitude of Jahāngīr

Nūr-ud-dīn Jahāngīr ascended the throne on the death of Akbar in 1014/1605. The manner in which Islam was systematically discouraged, insulted and persecuted during the reign of Akbar in a country which had not only been won by Muslim warriors but was also adorned by deephearted men of God was too painful to trouble the heart of the Mujaddid but that was the time when he was engaged in the quest for his own spiritual embellishment. The Mujaddid had not been able to launch

1. *Hazarātul-Quds*

his reformatory movement partly on account of his engagement in his own spiritual training and partly because he had not been able to evolve the method by which he could make an impact on the administration of the country and force it to change its policies in regard to Islam and the Muslims. We do not possess much details about the Mujaddid's endeavours during this period except that he wrote a few letters tendering advice to the King through Khān Khānān, Saiyid Sadr Jahān, Murtazā Khān and other nobles of the Imperial court. All these persons were close to the Emperor and had also been attached to the Mujaddid.

Jahāngīr was not inimical to Islam. Rather, he possessed liberal views on religious matters and respected the faith of his forefathers. He was not interested either in enforcing a new religion or a novel system of administration. As a man of generous instincts, he was fond of sports, arts and good living.

Mujaddid, however, considered Jahāngīr's reign as favourable for taking steps to eradicate the pernicious trends of the earlier regime which would be described latter on. But before he could fully begin his reformatory endeavours, he was put behind the bars in the Gwālior fort which had a great impact on his subsequent efforts and could, thus, be treated as a landmark in the history of his reformatory movement. Certain biographers and historians hold that a few of the Mujaddid's letters dealing with intricate stages of a mystic's journey on the path of spirit[1] were presented to Jahāngīr by interested persons to show that he was making extravagant claims

1. *See* letter No. 11 in Part I of the *Maktūbāt* addressed to Khwājā Bāqī Billāh.

Apart from Jahāngīr who was not conversant with the terminology of the mystics employed to express the different states and stages of the journey of spirit, certain other persons, too, whose depth of knowledge and mystical experiences are acknowledged by all, took exception to certain expressions of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī. Shaikh 'Abdul

(Continued on next page)

which ran counter to the accepted tenets of Islam. Jahāngīr expressed surprise at these writings and mistook them as arrogance and conceitedness of the Shaikh. The reference to the Shaikh in the Memoirs of Jahāngīr is indicative of his surprise as well as contempt for the esoteric utterances contained in the *Maktubāt*.[1] Jahāngīr's remarks show that he was not conversant with the esoteric realities and like a Turānian Mughal Amīr considering himself as the guardian of Muslims and their faith, he condemned the ideas running counter to the common beliefs of the Muslims according to his own understanding.

Shaikh Badī-ud-din had gained popularity among the royal troops and was held in esteem by a large number of grandees. This was also represented as a conspiracy engineered by Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī to get a foothold in the royal army for instigating rebellion. Shaikh Badī-ud-dīn was also guilty of indiscretion. Forgetting the rule of commonsense to speak before the commonality in accordance with their understanding, he had given expession to certain esoteric realities which

(Continued from previous page)

Haq Muhaddith Dehlawī, a well known scholar of *hadīth*, whose perfection of spirit cannot be questioned, expressed grave doubts about Sirhindi's views expressed in the above mentioned letter. He also corresponded with Sirhindi to get a clarification on the subject. Ultimately Shaikh 'Abdul Haq was satisfied with the replies given by Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, which was also later on acknowledged by him in one of his letters. The Shaikh's son Nūr-ul-Haq writes, "It has now been confirmed that one of the Shaikh's (Mujaddid) disciples, Hasan Khān by name, who was a Pathān, parted company with the Shaikh because of a certain matter. He made some interpolations in the copy of *Maktūbāt* he had got and sent its copies to different persons in order to defame the Shaikh (*Manāqib-ul-'Arifīn* by Shāh Fath Muhammad Fatehpūrī Chistī, p. 126). These very letters might have been a cause of Jahāngīr's anger against Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi.

1. *Tūzuk Jahāngīrī*, Vol. II, pp. 92-93.

were likely to create misunderstanding[1] about him and Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī. As already stated Jahāngīr was not conversant with the mystical disciplines. He had also certain grandees among his courtiers who were inimical to the Shaikh for the latter was also trying to counteract the Shī'ite influence. Consisting of the Iranian scholars and nobles, the Shī'ite element then held a predominant position in the court and Muslim society of the time. On the other hand, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī had been preaching the Sunnī creed and vigorously denouncing the Shī'ite beliefs. It would have, therefore, been not at all unreasonable if the Iranian nobles had taken advantage of the situation by representing the Shaikh's endeavours as politically motivated and instigated Jahāngīr to take action against him.

This was the time when the Mujaddid's popularity was at its climax and he was one of the most highly respected scholars and mystics of the time. Perhaps God intended him to face this trial and tribulation during the very acme and pitch of his popularity so as to endow him with an inward perfection of spirit that cannot be had without wearing the crown of thorns.

Reasons of Detention at Gwālior Fort

The reason behind Mujaddid's imprisonment normally given in historical and biographical writings is the letter written by him in which he describes the experiences of his spiritual strides and attainment of a spiritual eminence greater than the early precursors of faith.

It is, however, difficult to establish satisfactorily the reason behind Mujaddid's detention at Gwālior from the source material available now. It is doubtful if the Mujaddid was put behind the bars simply on account of these ecstatic expressions which could not be given the dress of words save in a metaphorical language by taking recourse to intricate mystical imagery

1. *Zubdatul-Muqāmāt*; p. 348.

and spiritual allegory. Was it simply this misunderstanding on the part of Jahāngīr or his zeal to defend the accepted beliefs of the *ahl-Sunnat wal-Jamā'at* or was it brought about on the insistence of religious scholars and spiritual leaders of the time? It is difficult to answer these questions but there can be no doubt about the fact that Jahāngīr was not a man of such deeper religious susceptibilities that he should have imprisoned a well known and highly respected religious figure simply on account of something which he would have even found difficult to understand.

Shaikh Muhammad Ghauth of Gwālior had, during the life-time of Jahāngīr's father and grandfather, made the arrogant claim of ascension which had caused considerable agitation among the scholars of the time.[1] A number of *fatāwā*[2] against him were issued by the scholars but neither Humāyūn nor Abkar took any action against him. In fact, certain other mystics of Jahāngīr's time had, in their expositions of the doctrine of Unity of Being, gone to the extent of asserting 'vision' and claiming 'equality' with God. Shaikh Muhīb Ullah of Allāhābād, a contemporary of Jahāngīr, wrote the *Al-Taswiyah* in Arabic and then its commentary in Persian in which he made mystical claims of an even more extravagant nature but no notice of his writings was taken by Jahāngīr. The reason given in Jahāngīr's Memoirs becomes all the more dubious when we consider the fact that the letter in question was written by the Mujaddid to Khwājā Bāqī Billāh in 1012/1603 while he was imprisoned sixteen years later in 1028/1619, that is, the fourteenth year of Jahāngīr's reign. Why did Jahāngīr kept quiet during all this period if he considered Shaikh Ahmad's writings to be so objectionable? It also does not stand to reason that Jahāngīr remained unaware

1. For details see *Shāh Muhammad Ghauth Gwāliori* by Prof. Muhammad Mas'ūd.
2. Juristic opinions of the scholars in accordance with the accepted norms of *shari'āh*.

of Shaikh Ahmad's letter for such a long period for he himself says that Shaikh Ahmad had attained considerable popularity. The possibility of the reason supposed to have been given by Jahāngīr being a subsequent interpolation in the Memoirs can also not be ruled out since there are several versions which profess to be the autobiographical Memoirs of Jahāngīr and all of them contain passages not found in another copy. Jahāngīr is reported to have himself written his memoirs upto a certain time and then appointed M'utamad Khān to continue to work. Another courtier, Mirza Muhammd Hādī, is reported to have written the preface and certain other parts of the Memoirs. Historians are of the view that Jahāngīr kept two or more memoir-writers to whom he gave directions as to the events they were to record on his behalf. There are also reasons to believe that the original work was edited after his death. Keeping all these facts in view it becomes highly improbable that the Mujaddid was imprisoned for writing something sixteen years back which was hardly of any interest to Jahāngīr.

The reason, it seems, was that Shaikh Ahmad had established close contacts with the dignitaries of Jahāngīr's court, and some of them held him in reverence. For an Emperor who had raised the banner of revolt against his father and won the throne after a tussle with his brothers, the influence wielded by Shaikh Ahmad was sufficient to create misgivings against him. In all probability Jahāngīr had come to know of the letters Shaikh Ahmad had been writing to this grandees for changing the existing state of affairs and bringing the government to the defence of Islam. This should have been a sufficient reason for creating misgivings against him in the mind of the Emperor.

These dignitaries of the royal court were, among others, such influential courtiers as Mirzā 'Azīz-ud-dīn, Khān Jahān Khān Lodhī, Khān Khānān Mirzā 'Abdur Rahīm, Mirzā Darāb and Qaleej Khān.

Moghul Emperors never looked with favour the popularity

of the sufi saints among the masses. Almost the same episode was repeated when one of the disciples of Mujaddid, Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī, earned the popular esteem of the people. In 1052/1642, when he went to Lahore accompanied by ten thousand persons, several of whom were scholars and respected sufi saints, Emperor Shāhjahān happened to be present in that city. He immediately felt the danger from Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī's popularity and created conditions which made the Shaikh leave India for Mecca. This also explains why Jahāngīr required the Mujaddid, after releasing him from Gwālior Fort, to remain with his Army so that he could find out the nature of his relationship with his dignitaries and make sure that he would not be a danger to his rule.[1] He allowed the Mujaddid to go to Sirhind only after he was convinced that the Mujaddid had no political intentions. The Mujaddid's sincerity, godliness and selflessness as well as his disinterestedness in the things worldly ultimately set at rest the doubts of the Emperor that any contender for his throne could exploit the Shaikh's popularity for his own ends.

Internment in the Gwālior Fort

Jahāngīr summoned the Mujaddid and simultaneously ordered the governor of Sirhind to make arrangements for Shaikh's journey to Āgra. The Mujaddid set forth with five of his disciples and was received by the protocol officials at the capital. He was lodged in a tent near the royal palace and then allowed to appear before the Emperor. He refused to perform the ceremonial etiquette consisting of complimentary

1. This appears to be most credible reason for Jahāngīr states in the *Memoirs* that the Mujaddid had "sent into every city and country one of his disciples, whom he calls his deputy" and that he imprisoned the Mujaddid so that "the excitement of the people should also subside." (*Memoirs of Jahāngīr*. Tr. Alexander Rogers, Vol. II, pp. 92-93)

prostration deemed un-Islamic by him. One of the courtiers of Jahāngīr invited the Emperor's attention to the failure of the Mujaddid and thereupon Jahāngīr asked the Mujaddid to explain his conduct. The Mujaddid replied that he did not know of any etiquette save that prescribed by God and the Prophet. Jahāngīr got annoyed and asked the Mujaddid to perform the prostration.[1] The Mujaddid refused again saying that he would not prostrate before anyone except God. Jahāngīr was further irritated and he ordered that the Mujaddid should be imprisoned in the Gwālior Fort.[2]

Shāhjahān had sent a message, just before this episode, through Afzal Khān and Khwājā Abdur Rahmān Muftī that complimentary prostration before the kings with the intention of showing honour to them was permissible in such circumstances. Therefore, should Mujaddid agree to do so on his visit to the Emperor, he would see that no harm was done to him. To this the Mujaddid had replied that it was simply a leave granted for saving oneself from an impending harm but the better course was to refuse prostration before anyone save God.[3]

This sad incident came to pass on a certain date during Rabī ul-Thānī, 1028/March, 1619 as the event is mentioned in the *Memoirs* along with other happenings of the time. After the imprisonment of the Mujaddid, his house, cloister, well, grove and the books were all confiscated and his dependants were transferred to another place.[4]

In the Gaol

The internment in Gwālior Fort proved a blessing for the

1. Prostration before the Emperor was prescribed by Akbar which was finally abolished by Aurangzīb.
2. *Hazarātul Quds*, p. 117
3. *Ibid.*, p. 116
4. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, letter No. 2

Mujaddid in the shape of increased popularity and greater spiritual attainments. Following the practice of Prophet Yūsuf, Shaikh Ahmad started preaching the message of true faith to other fellow convicts. Like the Prophet Yūsuf he raised the question, *Are divers lords better, or Allah the One, the Almighty?* with such persuation in the Gwālior Fort that several thousand non-Muslim convicts embraced Islam. There were hundreds of others who reformed their morals in his company; many raised themselves spiritually to the position of elects.

Dr. Arnold writes in the *Preaching of Islam :*

> "In the reign of Emperor Jahāngīr (1605-1628) there was a certain Sunnī Theologian, named Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid, who especially distinguished himself by the energy with which he controverted the doctrines of the Shi'ahs: the latter, being at this time in favour at court, had succeeded in having him imprisoned on some frivolous charge; during the two years that he was kept in prison he converted to Islam several hundred idolaters who were his companions in the prison."[1]

Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics mentions the achievements of Shaikh Ahmad in these words :

> "In India, in the seventeenth century, a theologion, named Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid, who had been unjustly imprisoned, is said to have converted several hundred idolaters whom he found in the prison."[2]

Religious Ecstasy during Interment

Shaikh Ahmad seems to have had no cause of regretting his imprisonment for he experinced ecstatic transports and spiritual enlightenment during that period. These were also communicated by him to his disciples through his letters. In one such letter

1. T. W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam* (London, 1935), p. 412
2. *Encylopedia of Religions and Ethics*, Vol. VIII, p. 748

written to Mīr Muhammad Nʿumān, sent by him from the Gwālior Fort, he says :

"Had the divine grace not come to my aid with constant flow of ecstatic transports and spiritual rewards, this weakling might have been pushed to the verge of despair and lost all hope. Praise be to God who blessed me with a sense of security in the midst of calamity; gave me honour through persecution; helped me to endure the hardships and to offer my thanks to Him; and included me in the ranks of those who follow in the footsteps of the prophets and love the pious and the elects. May God shower His blessings on His messengers and those who follow them."[1]

It seems that the imprisonment of Shaikh Ahmad was utilised by certain persons to defame him which hurt the feelings of his disciples. Referring to such reflections he wrote to Shaikh Badī-ud-dīn :—

"From the day this mendicant has arrived in this Fort, he has been having intuitive apprehensions of public dispargement heading towards him like radiant clouds from the cities and villages, which have helped him to attain higher regions of spiritual excellence. For years I had been imparted instruction through manifestation of God's beauty *(jamāl)* but now I am attaining these stages through the manifestation of His awe *(jalāl)*. You ought, therefore, to keep yourself at the stage of patience *(sabr)* and resignation *(ridha)* and regard the beauty *(jamāl)* and awe *(jalāl)* as identical."[2]

The Mujaddid also wrote letters from the Fort to his sons. In these he advised them to be patient and thankful to God. He bade them to pay attention to their studies and, at the same time, spend their time in God's remembrance and denial of all

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, letter No. 5
2. *Ibid.*, letter No. 6

powers save that of God.[1]

A few hagiographical writings contain the report that the Mujaddid's imprisonment created discontent among the religious minded courtiers which gave rise even to a few sporadic insurrections.[2] It is also claimed that the dignitaries like 'Abdur Rahīm Khān Khānān, Khān 'Āzam, Saiyid Sadr Jahān, Khān Jahān Lodī were displeased by the action taken by Jahāngīr. However, there is no evidence left by the contemporary historians to confirm these reports, nor, the connection between the insurrectionary events of the period and Shaikh Ahmad's imprisonment can be established by any sound historical method.

However, Jahāngīr felt remorse[3] after some time or he considered the period of imprisonment undergone by Shaikh Ahmad to be sufficient for the disrespect shown by him. Whatever may have been the reason, Jahāngīr ordered the Shaikh to be released after one year's imprisonment in Jamada-ul-Ākhir 1029/May, 1620. He also expressed the wish to meet Shaikh Ahmad again after his release from the prison.

Stay at the Royal Camp

The Mujaddid was honourably released from the prison from where he went to Sirhind. After three days stay at his home town he left for Āgra. He was received by the Crown Prince Khurram and the Prime Minister and conveyed the Emperor's desire that the Shaikh should take up residence with the royal army for some time. Shaikh Ahmad gave his consent to the proposal. His stay at the royal camp was of great

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, letter No. 2. *See* letters to Khwaja Muhammad M'asūm and Khwājā Muhammad Sa'eed.
2. Revolt by Mahābat Khān has been cited as an example in this connection but this is not correct because Mahābat Khān rebelled in 1035/1626, four or five years after the release of Shaikh Ahmad from Gwālior Fort.
3. It is reported that Jahāngīr saw the holy Prophet in a vision who expressed his displeasure at the imprisonment of Shaikh Ahmad.

benefit both to the king and the army personnel. However, Jahāngīr writes in his Memoirs that he released the Shaikh, gave him a dress of honour and Rs. 1,000 as expenses. He also says that he gave him the choice to go back or to remain with him but the Shaikh preferred to wait on him.[1]

On the other hand, the Mujaddid has described his stay at the royal camp in one of his letters to his sons. He wrote that he considered even a short stay at the camp, without deriving any material benefit from the king, to be better than spending a longer time elsewhere.[2]

In another letter he wrote:

> "Praise be to God and peace to His bondman, the holy Prophet. The conditions and the way things are shaping here evoke my praise and thanks to God. I am having a good company here, and by the grace of God, in none of my talks to these persons I have to make the least compromise in explaining the essentials of faith to them.
>
> The discussions in the meetings here pertain to the same issues which are touched upon in our private and special discourses but a whole tract would be required to describe them in detail."[3]

Shaikh Ahmad has also mentioned his meeting with the Emperor in one of his letters. He writes:

> "I have received the letter from my sons. Thanks God that I am quite well. I now refer to an event that happened today. It is Saturday night today when I went to have a private sitting with the Emperor and came back after three hours.[4] Thereafter I listened three *parās* of the

1. *Tūzuk-i-Jahāngīrī*, Vol. II, p. 161
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, letter No. 43
3. *Ibid.*, letter No. 106
4. Shaikh Ahmad has used the word *pahr* which means one-fourth of a night or day.

Qur'ān recited by a *hāfiz* and went to sleep after the dead of night."[1]

In yet another letter to Khwājā Hosām-ud-dīn he wrote:

"My sons and friends who are these days here with me are making progress on the path of spirit. The royal camp has taken the shape of a mystic cloister because of their presence."[2]

The Mujaddid accompanied the royal camp when it proceeded to Lahore. From there the royal camp moved on to Sirhind where he entertained the royal guest at a sumptuous repast. Shaikh Ahmad wanted to stay at Sirhind but the Emperor expressed the wish that he should not part company with him. The royal camp then proceeded to Delhi and then to Āgra.

A few biographical accounts of Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid Alf Thāni, compiled in recent times, present Jahāngīr as a disciple of the Shaikh on whose hands he had taken an oath of allegiance. There is, however, nothing to confirm this presumption by sound historical evidence. The description of Shaikh Ahmad's meeting with him, as given in the *Tūzuk-i-Jahāngīrī* does not support this view for no king, howsoever vainglorious and overweening would have described his spiritual mentor in that manner. Yohanan Friedmann has also expressed the view that there is little material to substantiate the thesis that Sirhindī succeeded in converting the Emperor to his particular view of Islam.[3] No primary source indicates that either Jahāngīr or Shāhjahān took oath of allegiance to the Mujaddid but it can also not be denied that Jahāngīr was impressed by him and became more sympathetic to Islam after coming in contact with him. He ordered reconstruction of demolished mosques and opening of religious schools in the newly conquered areas. The

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, letter No. 78
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, letter No. 72
3. *Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi*, p. 85

action taken by Jahāngīr on the occasion of his visit to Kāngrā following its conquest in 1031/1621 is an unmistakable indication of the change in his attitude towards Islam.[1]

The End of Journey

Khwājā Muhammad Kashmī writes that the Mujaddid was at Ajmer in 1032/1622 when he told his disciples that the day of his eternal rest was drawing near. In a letter to his sons, who were then at Sirhind, he wrote, "the journey's end is near but my sons are far away." His sons made haste to present themselves to their father at Ajmer. A few days after their arrival, the Shaikh said to them, "Now I have no interest in anything of this world, hereafter is uppermost in my thoughts and it seems that my journey's end is nigh."[2]

After his return from the royal camp Shaikh Ahmad stayed at Sirhind for ten months and eight or nine days.[3] It is related that on coming back from Ajmer to Sirhind he took to seclusion and nobody save his sons and two or three disciples[4] were permitted to call upon him. The Shaikh came out of his retirement only for the daily congregations or Friday prayers and spent the remaining time in recollection of God, repentance and devotions leading to inward perfection and beatification of spirit. During this period his life presented a complete picture of separation from everything for a journey

1. *Memoirs of Jahangīr*, Vol. II, p. 223
2. *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*, p. 282
3. Maulānā Abul Hasan Zaid, *Hazrat Mujaddid Aur Unke Nāqidīn*, pp. 164-65.
4. One of these disciples was Khwājā Muhammad Kashmī who had, however, gone to Deccan in Rajab 1033, about seven months before the death of Shaikh Ahmad, to bring his family back as insurrection had broken out there. Shaikh Badr-ud-dīn of Sirhind, another disciple of the Shaikh, remained in attendance of his mentor till his death. The description given here is based on his narrative in the *Zubdatul Muqāmāt* or the information given by the Shaikh's sons.

towards God through God.

By the middle of Zil Hijja Shaikh Ahmad's respiratory ailment took an acute form. Often he shed tears and repeated the words, "O Allah, the Exalted Companion." For a few days, during this period, he showed signs of improvement. To his kins and disciples who felt relieved by his signs of recovery, he often remarked, "The blissful elevation I experienced during my feebleness is wanting in this period of recovery." The Shaikh also gave out charities to the poor and needy with both hands during his period of illness. On the 12th of Muharram, he said, "I have been told that I will leave this world for the next within forty-five days. The location of my grave has also been shown to me." One day his sons found him sobbing and asked the reason for it. Shaikh Ahmad replied, "It is because of my eagerness to meet my Lord." When his sons further enquired why he was indifferent to them, the Shaikh said, "God is dearer than you."

The fortieth day after Shaikh Ahmad's forecast of death came up on the 22nd of Safar. All the relations and disciples were worried when the Shaikh pointed out, "It is the fortieth day of premonition to me. See what happens in the next seven or eight days." The Mujaddid appeared to the immersed in the sea of grace from God, singing of His praise and grace and blessings to him. On the 23rd Safar, he gave away all his wearing apparels to those attending him. With no warm robing on his person, Shaikh Ahmad caught cold and again developed fever.[1] This was, as if, to take after the beloved Prophet's *sunnah* who had a temporary recovery during his last illness.

Throughout his illness, Shaikh Ahmad continued to discourse upon the secrets of divine truths as though with a renewed vigour. When his son Khwājā Muhammad Sa'eed requested him

1. As Shaikh Ahmad died early in December, this should have been winter season.

to postpone his discourses till he had regained his health, Shaikh Ahmad replied, "My dear, where is the time to postpone these discourses?" Even when he had grown extremely weak he insisted on performing all the prescribed prayers with the congregation. Only for four or five days before his death he was prevailed upon by his attendants to perform these prayers alone, but he continued other supplications, recollections and contemplations in the usual manner. He also continued to follow other prescriptions of the *shari'ah* most punctiliously. During the last night of his earthly existence, he got up to perform ablution a few hours before dawn and stood on his prayer-mat to perform the *tahajjud*[1] prayer. Thereafter he remarked, "This is my last *tahajjud* prayer." And it really happened to be so, for he was not to have another opportunity of performing that particular orison.

A little while before the Shaikh left this fleeting world he had a brief spell of ecstatic transport. When asked about the nature of these entrances, he replied that these were trances of spiritual intoxication wherein secrets of recondite reality were being revealed to him. However, even during this period of his serious illness, when he had grown extremely weak, he continued to exhort his attendants to follow the example of the Prophet, to avoid all innovations and aberrations and to spend their time in the remembrance of God and contemplation. "You should be overscrupulous about every minute detail in following the Prophet's example; the Holy Prophet had left no stone unturned to clearly explain the path of virtue for the benefit of his followers; therefore, seek the knowledge about the Prophet's way from authoritative books and follow them with the greatest care," said Shaikh Ahmad and then added, "Follow the Prophet's example in performing my last rites." He also sent for his wife and said to her, "Since I am leaving this

1. A voluntary prayer performed a few hours before dawn.

world before you, meet my furneral expenses from your *mahr*.[1]" Shaikh Ahmad told his sons to lay him to rest at some unknown place. When his sons reminded him that he had earlier expressed the wish to be interned by the side of his eldest son Khwājā Muhammad Sādīq's[2] grave, he replied, "Yes, I had then wished it so, but now I desire it otherwise." However, finding his sons gloomy at his suggestion, the Shaikh added, "If you do not think it proper, bury me outside the city in some grove or beside my father's grave and let it be made of mud so that no trace of my grave remains after a short time." As the Shaikh's sons kept quiet at his instructions, he smiled and said, "I give you permission to bury me where you like."

The night before Tuesday falling on the 29th of Safar was the last night of the ailing Shaikh's earthly sojourn. To those who had attended him day and night throughout his illness, Shaikh Ahmad remarked, "All of you have laboured hard, now only a night's toil remains, and then you would be relieved." Towards the end of the night he said, "Let it be morning now." Early in morning, he asked to fetch a vessel for passing urine, but as it did not contain sand, he gave up the idea lest his clothes were soiled. Someone present at the time asked him to pass urine in a bottle which may be sent to the physician, but he replied, "I do not want my ablution to be nullified." The Shaikh then asked his attendants to make him lie on his bed as if he knew that the time of his departure had arrived and there was no time for performing another ablution. Lying down on his bed, he put his right hand below his cheek and occupied himself in the remembrance of God. Finding him breathing a bit fast, his sons enquired how was he feeling. Shaikh Ahmad replied that he was alright and then added that the two *rak'ats* of the prayer performed by him were enough.

1. Dower money.
2. He was the eldest son of Shaikh Ahmad who died on 9th Rabi I, 1025 A.H.

Thereafter he uttered nothing except the name of God and yielded his breath. This was Tuesday morning, the 29th of Safar, 1034 A.H.[1]

Shaikh Ahmad was in the 63rd year of his age when he bid farewell to the world.[2]

When the Shaikh's dead body was brought out for washing, his right hand was placed upon the left, below the navel, as if in the prayer. His hands were stretched out for washing but they were again found to have taken the previous position after the body had been washed. It appeared from the Shaikh's countenance as if he was smiling.

The funeral arrangements were made strictly according to the *sunnah*. His elder son Khwājā Muhammad Sa'eed presided over the funeral prayer and then the Shaikh's dead body was taken away for the eternal rest.[3]

Character and Daily Routine

Khwāja Muhammad Hāshim Kashmī had been a constant companion of the Mujaddid during last three years of his life. He has recorded in detail the daily routine and disposition of his spiritual mentor in the *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*. The account of Shaikh Ahmad's character given here has been taken largely from Kashmī's description with a few additions from Badr-ud-dīn Sirhindī's *Hazarātul Quds*.

Shaikh Ahmad was often heard saying, "Nothing can be obtained simply by our effort; whatever we have it was due to the grace of God. But the blessings of God, too, depend on taking after the custom of the holy Prophet, on whom be peace. This, in my opinion, is the source of all blessings.

1. 10th December, 1624.
2. According to Zaid Abul Hasan Shaikh Ahmad died at the age of sixty years, six months and five days according to the Solar calendar and sixty-two years four months and fourteen days according to the Lunar calendar. (*Hazrat Mujaddid Aur Unke Nāqidīn*, p. 22)
3. *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*, pp. 256-300.

Whatever God has given me, it was made available because of my following the Prophet, and whatever was denied to me it was because of my own shortcoming in doing so." Once he said, "One day I advanced my right foot first while entering the lavatory. Although it was by mistake, I was denied many an ecstatic experience on that day." Another time he asked a disciple, Sālih Khatlānī, to bring a few cloves from his pouch. The Shaikh expressed displeasure when he saw that Sālih had brought six cloves. He said, "My sufi seems to be ignorant of the *hadith* that Allah is *witr*[1] and He loves *witr*. It is commendable to keep in view the odd numbers of *witr*. But what do the people know of commendable acts? Even if this world and the next were awarded to some one for performing something liked by God, it would not be really a sufficient reward." One of the disciples of Shaikh Ahmad asked Shaikh Muhammad b. Fazl Ullah to tell him what he had seen at Sirhind. Shaikh Muhammad replied, "How can I explain everything I saw there, but I found the minutest details of the *sunnah* being acted upon with the utmost care. Nobody could have been so meticulous as he was." Another witness relates, "The inward perfection of Shaikh Ahmad is beyond my comprehension but I can say that on seeing Shaikh Ahmad I came to know that the accounts of the saints of old given in the books are no exaggaration, rather it seems that the writers have been reticent in giving those details. The entire day was spent in prayers and remembrance of God." A disciple of Shaikh Ahmad who used to attend to his ablution, bringing of the prayer mat etc., relates: "I get a little respite after the meals and during the last third part of the night. The Shaikh keeps on exhorting his disciples to engage themselves in prayers, remembrance and contemplation." He further quoted the Shaikh who used to say, "This world is a place of endeavour, so combine your inward state with your outward

1. *Lit. Witr* means odd number.

temperament and actions. Even the holy Prophet used to stand for such a length of time at prayers that his legs used to get swelled."

Shaikh Ahmad was well-versed in *fiqah* but he always consulted some authoritative book of jurisprudence whenever the need arose. So careful was he in this respect that he always had some books at hand whether he was in camp or cantonment, and he always preferred to act on the legal opinion of an accepted authority. He used himself to lead the prayers. Once explaining the reason for it he said, "Prayers remain incomplete without recitation of the *sūrah Fātiha*[1] according to the Shaf'eites and Malikites, and, therefore, they recite the *Fātiha* even behind an *imām*.[2] This view also finds support from a number of undoubted Traditions but Imām Abū Hanīfah does not consider it necessary to recite the *Fātiha* when the prayer is led by another man. A majority of juris-consults belonging to the Hanafite school are also agreed upon this view. However, as I try to act according to all the different schools, the easiest course to do so appears to lead the prayers myself."[3]

Shaikh Ahmad normally used to get up at midnight or when one-third of the night still remained; this was his settled routine whether it was summer or winter, or he was at his house or in a journey. After reciting certain supplications mentioned in the *ahādith* he performed ablution again, taking care to wash all the parts thoroughly. Normally he faced the *qiblah*[4] while performing ablutions, but changed his direction to north or the south while washing his feet. He also brushed

1 The first chapter of the Qur'ān.

2. One who leads the prayer.

3. Khwājā Muhammad Hāshim Kashmī quotes Shaikh Ahmad at another place as having said, "I recite *Fatiha* behind the *imām* and consider it preferable." *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*, p. 209

4. Direction of the K'abah, which all Muslims are required to face while performing prayers.

his teeth with *miswāk*[1] and recited the supplications prescribed for performing ablutions. Thereafter he offered a few *rak'ats* of voluntary prayers in which he normally recited some of the longer *sūrahs*. That ended, he contemplated for a while and then took a brief rest following the practice of the Prophet. He got up again early in the morning, performed ablution and said the *sunnat*[2] prayers at his house. In between the period of *sunnat* and *farz*[3] prayers, he normally kept on repeating silently; *Subhānallāh bihamdahū, Subhānallāh il-'Azīm*: (Holiness to Allah, and all praises are for Him; Holiness to Allah, the Exalted one.) The obligatory prayer of *fajr*[4] was started by him when it was still dark while he ended it when the early light of the dawn had appeared. In this manner the Shaikh used to act according to the different juristic schools which require morning devotions to be offered before or after the peep of dawn. He led the prayer himself and recited one of the longer *sūrahs*[5] of the Qur'ān, as was the practice of the Prophet. The time between the morning prayers and the prayer of *ishrāq*[6] which is offered when the sun has well risen, was spent in giving training of meditation to his disciples. Then, after the *ishrāq* prayers and recitation of supplications he went to his house where he enquired about the well-being of his family members and gave attention to their needs. This was followed by recitation of the Qur'ān after which he sent for those who came to see him or to seek his help in any matter. This was also the time fixed for meeting the selected friends and disciples whom he told about spiritual flights and spiritual perfections, taught the method of contemplation or listened to their experiences of spiritual elevation.

1. A tooth-cleaner made of wood, about a span long.
2. A prayer performed or commended by the Prophet.
3. An obligatory prayer.
4. Time for morning devotions performed before sunrise.
5. The *sūrahs* from *Al-Hujarāt* to *Al-Burūj* are known as the longer *sūrhas*.
6. A voluntary prayer offered at an hour or so after the sunrise.

Shaikh Ahmad normally asked them to be upward-looking, to follow the practices of the Prophet, keep themselves engaged in remembrance of God and to conceal their spiritual perfection. Oftentimes he explained the significance of *Lā Ilāh il-Allāh; Muhammad-ur-Rasūlul-Allāh,* saying, that the entire universe was not even a drop in ocean as compared to this formula of true faith. The Shaikh also used to urge upon them to study *fiqah*[1] and seek the guidance of the scholars in finding out the injunctions of the *shari'ah.*[2]

Shaikh Ahmad once said that the inward eyes of his mind have revealed to him that the world was like a sea of darkness because of the impious innovations while the *sunnah* of the Prophet emitted light in it like the glow-worms. The Shaikh hated speaking ill of any Muslim, nor any disciple dared to reflect discredit on others in his presence. He also tried to conceal his own spiritual experiences from others. Khwāja Mohammad Hāshim Kashmī relates that within the period extending to two years he saw drops of tears in the eyes of the Shaikh three or four times while explaining intricate matters of sufism.

Shaikh Ahmad used to go twice inside his house every day; first after the prayer of *chāsht*[3] and the second time after *zuhal-kubrā.*[4] On the second occasion he used to take food with his sons and other members of family. If he found any one absent, he used to give instructions for keeping his share apart. He ate very little; sometimes it was for name-sake only, as if he just shared the meals with others to follow the Prophet's *sunnah;* for he spent more time in urging others to eat heartily, or presenting some dish to them.[5]

1. Jurisprudence of Islam.
2. The Law of Islam.
3. Voluntary prayer performed at about 11 a.m.
4. The time midway between sunrise and sunset.
5. *Hazarātul-Quds,* p. 87.

During the last few years of his life, when he mostly spent a secluded life, he used to keep fasts and take his food alone. Shaikh Ahmad did not recite *sūrah Fātiha* after the meals as was the custom with other mystics, for there was nothing to support this practice in the genuine Traditions. Similarly, he did not recite the *Fātiha* after the obligatory prayers like other sufis.

Shaikh Ahmad used to take a little rest after the mid-day meal in the way it is reported about the holy Prophet. The call to prayer at the time of *zuhr*[1] was given a bit early when the Shaikh performed the ablution and thereafter offered the voluntary prayers soon after the decline of the sun. The prayer ended, he either sat down to listen about one part of the Qur'ān recited by a *hāfiz*[2] or lectured to his disciples. He performed the *'asr*[3] at the appointed time and spent the interval up to the *maghrib*[4] prayers with his disciples in meditation. He used to offer four or six *rak'ats* of voluntary prayers after the obligatory prayers of *maghrib*. The night or *ishā*[5] prayers were performed by him just after the twilight of evening had disappeared. In the prayer of *witr* he used to recite both the supplications of *qunūt* prescribed by the Hanafite and Shaf'eite schools. The two voluntary *rak'ats* after *witr* were performed by him either sitting or standing, but in the old age he had left offering this orison. He did not perform the two prostrations after *witr* like others.

The Mujjadid used to retire to the mosque during the last ten days of the Ramadhān. He retired early to his bed after the prayers of *'ishā* and *witr*, and busied himself in reciting supplications and benedications *(darūd)* imploring mercy and blessings

1. Prayer offered when the sun begins to decline.
2. One who has committed the Qur'ān to his heart.
3. Prayer offered midway between decline of the sun and sunset.
4. Prayer offered after sunset.
5. Prayer after an hour and a half after sunset.

for the holy Prophet. The latter was usually recited a great deal by him on Fridays and Mondays. When he recited the Qur'ān one could see the sublime effect of the holy Scripture's intonation on his face. More often he recited, during the prayers and besides them, the verses which strike a note of awe or wonder or produce that effect through the peculiar style and symphony of the Qur'ān. He took care to observe all the directions enjoined in the *ahādīth* for the performance of the prayers, offered the voluntary prayers after performing ablutions and on entering a mosque; performed no other voluntary prayer with the congregation except the *tarāwīh*[1]; and forbade others to perform the voluntary prayers of the 10th of Muharram or *Shab-i-Qadr*[2] collectively in congregation.

The Mujaddid always used to pay a visit to those who were taken ill and also made supplications for them. He often repaired to the cemetery to pray over the dead. Shaikh Ahmad delivered lectures on the exegesis, Traditions, jurisprudence, dialectics and mysticism and taught the books like *Tāfsīr Baidāwī*, *Sahīh Bukhārī*, *Mishkāt-ul-Masābīh*, *Hidāyah*, *Bazdāwī*, *Mawāqif*, *'Awārif-ul-'Awārif* etc., but he never indulged in futile discussions. Towards the end of his life's journey, he lectured only occasionally and instructed his disciples to study the religious sciences. The Shaikh, in fact, gave greater importance to religious studies than mystical disciplines. He spent much of his time in devotions and supplications and seeking repentance of his sins, and thanked God a lot for the smallest favour.

The Mujaddid was very particular about Ramadhān when he recited the Qur'ān at least thrice during the month. Having committed the Qur'ān to the tablets of his memory, he used to recite the Qur'ān besides Ramadhān also and listened to its

1. The prayers, of usually twenty *rak'ats*, recited at night during the month of Ramadhān.
2. Lit. The night of power. A night in the month of Ramadhān wherein began the revelation of the Qur'ān.

recital by others.[1] He made haste in breaking the fasts, as was the practice of the Prophet, and delayed the pre-dawn meal during Ramadhān.[2]

His practice in the payment of poor-due *(zakāt)* was to pay it immediately on receiving the amount upon which the *zakāt* was payable without awaiting the completion of one year on its possession. He gave preference to the needy, mendicants, widows and poor relations in giving out the dues of the *zakāt*. He had a great desire to perform the *haj*, for which he made up his mind several times, but could not fullfil his wish for one reason or the other until the time arrived when he was summoned up for the last sleep.

Mujaddid was very courteous and polite in his manners, extremely considerate and benevolent to one and all and well-pleased to whatever fell to his own lot. His friends and relatives had, for a time, to face a hard time owing to the attitude of over-zealous officials, but the Mujaddid never complained and always remained resigned to God. If anybody came to see him, he always stood up to welcome the guest, seated the visitor with honour and carried on conversation on the subject he liked to discuss. However, he did not pay the same respect to non-believers even if they were men of substance or belonged to the ruling clique. He was always first to salute others; even his youngers could not take the lead over him in this regard. He was extremely considerate to those who were dependent on him. Whenever the news of anybody's death was communicated to him, he seemed to be visibly moved and immediately uttered the words: *Innā lillāhi wa innā ilaih rāje'ūn* (To God we belong and to Him shall we return), joined the funeral procession and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.[3]

His dress consisted of a loose shirt and a robe over it—

1. *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*, pp. 192-215
2. *Hazratul Quds*, p. 91
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92

the latter was dispensed with in the summer—and a turban whose loose end was kept hanging on the back. The pyjama worn by him left the ankles bare. On Fridays and the two *Ids* he used to put on a better dress. Whenever he donned a new dress, he gave the one worn by him to a servant or a relation or a guest. The Shaikh was normally paid a visit by fifty to sixty scholars, mystics and nobles every day; often their number rose to a hundered or more; and they were all entertained like guests.[1]

Features

Shaikh Badr-ud-dīn Sirhindī, a spiritual successor of Shaikh Ahmad who kept his company for seventeen years, has given his facial appearance in the *Hazarātul Quds.* He writes: "The Shaikh's complexion was wheatish but his forehead and cheeks glowed with a radiance that made it difficult to fix one's gaze on his face. The eyebrows were black, thick and long, curved like a bow, eyes were wide with snow-white eyeballs and jet black cornea; lips were delicate, red in colour, mouth was of a medium size, neither big nor small; the teeth were compact and shining like rubies; the beard was thick and long but quadrate in shape and the cheeks had but a few hair. The Shaikh was of a moderate height, slim and delicate in appearance."

Sons of Shaikh Ahmad

The Mujaddid was blessed with seven sons, of whom three—Muhammad Farrukh, Muhammad ʿIsā and Muhammad Ashraf—died at a tender age. The eldest son Khwājā Muhammad Sādiq lived to attain the age of 25 years and died in 1025/1616 after completing his formal education and fathoming the secrets of mysticism. The remaining three who survived their father were Khwājā Muhammad Saʿeed, Khwājā Muhammad Mʿasūm

1. *Hazarātul, Quds*, p. 92

and Khwājā Muhammad Yahyā.

Khwājā Muhammad Sādiq had attained spiritual perfection during the lifetime of his father. The Mujaddid used to praise him for his perfection both in knowledge and inward qualities. In one of his letters Shaikh Ahmad wrote about him: "This dear son of mine is an agglomeration of this mendicant's mystical cognitions and a scripture of his stages of devotion and attraction."[1]

The second son Khwājā Muhammad Sa'eed was born in 1005/1596 and died on 27th Jamāda-ul-Ākhir 1070/28th March, 1660. He took an active part in propagating the mystic order of his father and guided the seekers after the path of spirit.[2]

Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm, the third son of Shaikh Ahmad, lived to become the renowned spiritual successor of his father. As a virtuous son of a pious father he popularised the Mujaddidyah order far and near. His famous cloister of Mujaddidyah mystics at Delhi was graced by Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn, Mirzā Mazhar Jān-i-Jānān, Shāh Ghulām 'Alī and Shāh Ahmad Ṣa'eed. It was the seminary where Maulānā Khālid Rūmī got the training of spiritual perfection at the feet of Shāh Ghulām 'Alī and then spread its message abroad throughout Irāq, Syria, Kurdistān and Turkey.[3]

The letters written by Khwāja Muhammad M'asūm, since compiled in three volumes, provide a commentary on the *Maktūbāt* of his father and explain intricate issues of mystical experience. They are valued for their depth and richness. A

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, letter No. 277. For a detailed account see *Zubdatul Muqamāt*, pp. 303-306
2. For a detailed account about him see *Zubdatul Muqāmāt*, pp. 308-15.
3. *See* Allāmā Sh'āmī's *Sīl al-Hosām al-Hindī li-Nasrata Maulānā Khālid Naqshbandī* and *Sharah Durr Mukhtār*. The writer had had the privilege of meeting several mystics of this order like Shaikh Ibrāhīm Ghulāmīnī, Shaikh Abul Khair Maidānī, Shaikh Muhammad Nabhān in the Arab countries. The mystic Shaikhs of this order are still to be found in Syria, Irāq, Turkey and Kurdistān.

separate treatise would be required to describe his achievements.

Aurangzīb had taken oath of fealty to him and was guided in the mystical discipline by his son Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn. Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm refers to Aurangzīb in his letters as the 'Defender-Prince of Faith' whom he guided and urged to take the sceptre in his hand for rooting out the harmful effects of Akbar's Dīn-i-Ilāhī from India.

Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm was born on 11th Shawwāl 1007 A.H.[1] and he died on the 9th Rabī al-Awwal, 1079 A.H.[2]

The fourth son of Shaikh Ahmad, Khwājā Muhammad Yahyā, was only 9 years of age when his father died. He completed his formal education under the care of his brothers who also guided him on the spiritual path of his father. He died in 1096/1685.

1. 27th April, 1599 A.D.
2. 7th August, 1668 A.D.

CHAPTER VI

THE CORE OF THE MUJADDID'S MOVEMENT

What does it constitute the nucleus of Mujaddid's revivalist movement and what was his achievement?

All those who are well-posted with the religious situation in the world of Islam at the end of the first millennium, that is, in the sixteenth century A.D., in general, and the developments in India,[1] in particular, are agreed that the achievement of Shaikh Ahmad lies in his remarkable success in protecting the Islamic creed which deserves to be called by what is known as *tajdīd* (revivalism) in the *hadīth* phraseology.[2] The accomplishment was indeed so perfect that the endeavour of Shaikh Ahmad

1. The religious condition of Muslims in India has been described, albeit briefly, in the first two chapters.
2. A well known *hadīth* of the *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* says: Allah will at the end of each century bring forward one who will revive the faith of this *ummah*. For a detailed discussion relating to this *hadīth* see *Jāmī ul-Mujaddidīn* by Maulana Abdul Bari Nadwi and the scholarly introduction to the book by Saiyid Sulaimān Nadwi.

became a synonym of *tajdīd* or revivalism as it was something unprecedented in the history of Islam.

But, what was the endeavour of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī? It consisted of reviving the thought and spirit of Islam in India. It aimed at curbing the greatest menance of the time by restoring conviction in the prophethood of Muhammad and reasserting the abiding truth of *sharī'ah*. Shaikh Ahmad demonstrated the hollowness of theosophical thought based on neo-Platonist theosophy which professed to attain the knowledge of God through spiritual ecstasy unrelated to the path shown by the Prophet of Islam. The theory of *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* (Unity of Being) and *hama ost* (All is He) had captured the heart and mind of Muslim masses so powerfully that their conviction in the truth of Islam was gradually giving place to an eclecticism which was giving rise to the danger of a complete disintegration of the Muslim society. The Mujaddid presented the alternative theory or *Wahdat-us-Shuhūd* (Unity of Manifestation), launched a vigorous attack against *bid'ah* (innovation in religion), denied the commonly accepted *bid'at-i-hasanah* (pious innovation) and revolutionised the Muslim society in a way that it completely discarded Akbar's thought. The Mujaddid unfolded his well-conceived plan of reform and renovation so thoughtfully that, on the one hand, a man like Muhi-ud-dīn Aurangzīb ascended the throne once occupied by Akbar and, on the other, Shāh Walī Ullah and his worthy successors took upon themselves the task of bringing about a religious awakening and spiritual regeneration of the Indian Muslims through teaching and preaching of the *kitāb* (the holy Qur'ān) and the *sunnah*. They caused a chain of educational institutions to be set up, reformed the Muslim society of its un-Islamic customs and usages, awakened the spirit of *jihād*, and made India a centre of Islamic learning, particularly that of *hadīth*. It was, thus, through the efforts of the Mujaddid that India became the focal point of Islamic thought and a harbinger of its call.

But the question still remains as to what was the central point of his wide-ranging revivalist endeavour, the single greatest achievement among a series of his brilliant accomplishments?

Different persons have tried to answer this question in different ways, perhaps, according to their own inclinations. And they fall into three categories.

(1) There are certain persons who hold that Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī deserves to be called Mujaddid Alf Thānī, that is, Renovator of the second millennium because he regained India for Islam which was about to slip into the hands of religious eclecticism and thus saved it, during the eleventh century A.H. (sixteenth century A.D.), from the fate it was to meet later on in the thirteenth century A.H. (nineteenth century A.D.). In fact, they argue, he saved the Indian Muslims from the immediate danger of a comprehensive religious, intellectual and cultural apostasy which had been made virtually unavoidable by Akbar's passionate drive and iron will and the intelligence of his sharp-witted advisers like Mullā Mubārak, Faizī and Abul Fazl. Had this onslaught succeeded in subverting Islam at that time it would have undoubtedly been far more serious and would have had more far-reaching consequences than the political decline suffered by Islam through the rise of non-Muslim forces in the eighteenth century and the subsequent consolidation of the British power in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Iqbal has perhaps alluded to this fact in one of his couplets in which he says:

He guarded in Ind the *millat's* treasure,
For Allah forewarned him at the right juncture.

(2) There is another group of scholars which thinks that the Mujaddid's revivalist endeavour consists of advocating the superiority of *sharī'ah* (the law) over *tarīqah* (the mystic path) in such a forceful, confident and authoritative manner as was never done by anybody before him. He made it abundantly

clear that the *tariqah* was meant to sub-serve the *shari'ah* and this checked the tendency to overlook or rather reject the *shari'ah*. India being the home of *yoga* and asceticism there was no dearth of misguided mystics who had blended mystic practices with philosophic meditation reposing trust in self-mortification, spiritual ecstasy and direct intuition. This tendency was arrested by the Mujaddid at the crucial moment for nobody was able to claim after him that the *shari'ah* and *tariqah* were two separate disciplines or that compliance with the *shari'ah* was not essential for the *tariqah*.

(3) The third group consists of those who hold that the vigorous attack by the Mujaddid on the concept of *Wahdat ul-Wujūd* or the Unity of Being constituted real keynote of his revivalist effort. In their view nobody had launched out so forcefully against that misguided doctrine before him. He succeeded in stemming it so effectively that no body raised his voice in its favour in the succeeding centuries. The religious and intellectual cricles came to accept the Mujaddid's authoritative views on the subject with such a confidence in him that the contradictory notions and thoughts were thereafter regarded as blind and nacked ignorance. Saiyid Manāzir Ahsan Gīlānī has expressed this view very trenchantly in one of his brilliant articles entitled 'The Revivalist Achievement of the Second Millennium' in which he says :

> "The hairsplitting argumentations on the niceties of *Wahdat ul-Wujūd* and *Wahdat-us-Shuhūd* and the pedantic wranglings of the scholastics and mystics over the *shari'ah* and *tariqah* have been so mixed up with the genuine revivalist endeavours of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī that today the Shaikh is blindly called Renovator of the second millennium without giving thought to his great achievements."[1]

1. M. Manzoor Nomani, *Tazkira Imām Rabbānī Mujaddid Alf Thānī*, p. 27

Trust in Muhammad's Prophethood

But the fact is that the greatest achievement of the Mujaddid which is the nucleus of his entire endeavour or the focal point of his multi-dimentional reformatory programme was his success in creating a trust in the need and abiding nature of Muhammad's prophethood. It was a task never undertaken by any reformer before him, perhaps, as the need for it was not felt in the bygone ages nor any philosophy or movement challenging this concept had reared its head in the earlier times.[1]

It was this principle of reform and renovation which struck at the root of perversion threatening to subvert the religious, spiritual and intellectual bases of the Muslim society. The authors of this crookedness were the followers of the Nuqtawī movement of Irān who had openly revolted against the prophethood of Muhammad on the ground that the term of his apostleship had ended with the completion of one thousand years of Islamic era. They claimed that the new age required a fresh principle of human action based on reason and philosophy which was furnished by Mahmūd of Basakhwān who had also claimed that his disciples and the centres of his cult would be in Irān and India.[2] We can treat Akbar's Dın Ilāhī and his new order as a ramification of this deviation whose zealous supporters claimed to replace the apostleship of Muhammad and the Law of Islam in India by another system of belief. Innovations and deviations were making inroads in the religious and social life of the Muslims; even purely religious devotions and rituals were absorbing these ideas of agnosticism; a new code of life and behaviour was gradually getting legitimised; and all these were posing a challenge to the prophethood of Muhammad and the way of life taught by him.

1. We find something of the thought in question in Ibn Taimiyah's writings particularly in the *An-Nabūwāt*, *Nuqṣ-ul-Mantiq* and *Al-Radd al-Mantiqiyīn*, but he does not go beyond making some sketchy references to the principle.
2. See first chapter.

Then, in the train of these false pretensions, came the theory of *Wahdat ul-Wujūd* which, according to its votaries, was based on ecstatic revelations. Its most ardent advocates had never claimed that either the Prophet of Islam had ever preached this precept or the Prophet's companions or their successors had propagated this doctrine, but, consciously or unconsciously, it tried to assert itself as a doctrine antagonistic to the concept of prophethood and revealed guidance. The more deeply it took root in the Muslim society by capturing the minds and hearts of the people, the more Muslim commonality lost its conviction in the infallability of Islam as the only saving principle. The doctrine of *Wahdat ul-Wujūd* had thus prepared the way for indifference and lethargy, irreligion and disbelief towards religious observances although some of its preachers were pious mystics who punctiliously observed the rules of *shari'ah* and detested transgression of the law as promoted by pantheistic doctrines.

The followers of the *Imāmiyah* creed could also be included in this misguided sect. They believed in the divine and indefeasible right of the *imāms* to lead the Muslims and venerated them as divinely appointed leaders in the same way as the prophets of God.[1] In a like manner, the view held by it about a majority of the holy Prophet's companions disclaimed the marvellous effect of prophetic guidance and contradicted the Quranic revelation : *He it is who hath sent among the unlettered ones a messenger of their own, to recite unto them His revelations and to make them grow, and to teach them the Scripture and*

1. The books accepted as authentic by this sect hold that an *imām* is, intrinsically and extrinsically, sanctified without a spot of blemish or the capacity to sin; whose obedience is incumbent on all believers. He can work miracles and is blessed with intuitional knowledge of everything connected with the law. The *imām* will continue to appear in every age till the Day of Reckoning arrives as

(Continued on the next page)

Wisdom.[1] This sect was speedily extending its influence in India owing to certain political and other reasons, and the Indian Muslim society, though subscribing to the creed of *Ahl-Sunnah wal-Jam'ah*, was gradually accepting many of the *Imāmiyah* thoughts and customs.

By reviving conviction and trust in the prophethood of Muhammad the Mujaddid tore apart all the obstructions created by the Greek and Iranian philosophies and the Indian and Egyptian[2] mystical thoughts as if he broke by one stroke all those barriers which had concealed the true faith from the sight of the then Muslim society.

Limitation of Spiritual and Intellectual Faculties

A great achievement of the Mujaddid as a Renovator of faith consisted of his demonstrating the incompetence of knowledge gained through intellectual process as well as spiritual intuition to penetrate the metaphysical truths, such as, the gnosis of God, His attributes, the ultimate truth and reality of existence, etc. He showed that the knowledge gained through either of these sources was neither beyond doubt nor free from mistake. He proved that the true knowledge of God could be had through revelation vouchsafed to the prophets for it occupied a higher place in comparison to

(Continued from previous page)

a sign of God. (As-Shaikh Muhammad Husain Āl-Kāshiful Ghita's *Asl ash-Shi'ata wa Usūlha*, a commentary of Al-Tūsī's *Kitāb ash-Shāfi lil Sharif al-Murtazā*). Abū Zāhrā writes in the *Kitāb Tārikh al-Mazāhib al-Islāmiyah*, Vol. I, that all the scholars of the Imāmiyah sect are agreed on the equality of an *imām* and a prophet. The only difference, according to them, between a *wasī* and a *nabī* is that the former is not a recipient of revelation like a prophet of God.

1. Q. LXII: 2
2. Egypt had once been a great centre of neo-Platonist philosophy with such theosophists as Plotinus, Porphery and Proclus.

intellect in the same way as intellect was superior to sensory perceptions. Thus, the knowledge of God and the correct way of divine worship could be known from the prophets alone. He established that the ancient Greek philosophers had committed grevious mistakes in understanding the true nature and attributes of God. This was because there was nothing like pure or abstract intellect nor there existed any pure and unmixed spiritual intuition or ecstatic inspiration, free from all intrinsic and extrinsic influences. The mystics and theosophists had blundered, explained Mujaddid, like the philosophers, because they failed to recognise that intellect and theosophy were both equally incompetent to get at the knowledge pertaining to God. This meant that the prophethood remained as the only trustworthy medium of obtaining knowledge about God and His attributes and commandments.

The Mujaddid went further to affirm that the pure and unmixed intellect was a myth: human intellect was influenced by subjective factors like one's beliefs and concepts while external events and conditions also threw their weight into the scale. Thus, the stand-point of intellect was always coloured by one's subjective consciousness and objective observations. The Mujaddid demonstrated that the intellect was a defective medium to discover the ultimate truth.

He also drew a line of demarcation between the purification of self and the purification of heart and explained the reason for making a distinction between the two. He afforded proof to show that one who upholds prophethood from the core of his heart really possesses adequate reasons for his convictions. Thus, acceptance of prophetic information with the stipulation of its confirmation by one's intellect really amounted to its rejection. He also explained that nothing in the prophetic teachings was against human reason or intellect and that there was a lot of difference between a thing being beyond one's intellect or understanding and its being against reason or logic.

The revolutionary concepts propounded by the Mujaddid about the nature of intellectual cognition and spiritual inspiration caused a flutter in the then intellectual and religious circles and opened the way to the new method of inductive reasoning. On the one hand, he gave a lie to the accepted notions of the day which were claimed to have been based on pure intellect, and, on the other, established the truth of prophecy and transcendental realities known through it. It was, in fact, a concept attempting fundamental reconstruction of thought by rejecting the prevalent principles of thought and accepted mental impressions of the then intellectuals, religious and spiritual circles. It was not a product of its time—the then scholastic disquisitions or intellectual deliberations—for the world took a few centuries more to arrive at the same conclusion. It was naught but a favour from God, a divine regeneration which helped him to discover the highest unitary principle of thought essential for the success of his revivalist call given at the beginning of the second millennium of the Islamic era. Or, one can say, it was the reward for his spirited defence of prophethood and the *shari'ah* for which he had been preparing himself from the very outset of his career by following the precepts and practices of the holy Prophet of Islam.

In order to understand the significance of Shaikh Ahmad's thought hinted at the foregoing paragraphs, it would be necessary to have a closer look at the perspective giving rise to the questions that were engaging attention of the learned and the scholastics of the time.

Some Basic Questions

There are a few questions of primary importance not only for a life of virtue and goodness in this world but also for the redemption of our soul in the afterlife. These questions are: Who is the Creator of this universe? What are His attributes? In what way is He related to us and what is our corresponding

position with regard to Him? Are there things or actions that please or displease Him and, if so, what are they? Is there any life after death? And, if there is one, what is its nature? Are there also some instructions available to us for success in the afterlife?

Any attempt to answer these questions will go in search of the person and attributes of the Divine Being, Alpha and Omega of the world, hereafter, paradise, hell, revelation, existence of angels and similar other metaphysical questions that are fundamental to every creed and religion.

Man has been trying to find satisfactory answers to these questions in two ways; first, through his intellect and, the second, by taking recourse to theosophical techniques. The first we call philosophy and the other mysticism.

But, both these methods are basically wrong for they base their inquiry on certain presumptions which arise from an incorrect appreciation of these issues. It seems worthwhile to elucidate this point with the help of the Mujaddid's letters which are preceded here by a brief introduction to the issue under consideration.

Critique of Pure Reason and Ecstatic Inspiration

In regard to intellect, it ought to be kept in mind that it is not self-sufficient to perform its functions of knowing, analysing and reasoning since it has to depend on other subordinate faculties. In taking a view of unknown and intangible objects it has to rely on the information and experiences it has gathered about the things already known to it through sensations of external objects perceived by sensory organs. It compiles and analyses the information stored by it to draw conclusions from these premises about the things not known to it or which cannot be made known to it through the sensorial perceptions. If we examine the working of intellect and its way of reasoning we will find that all the conclusions drawn by it about what we call higher realities are drawn from these very primary

sensory perceptions which, by themselves, are insufficient to supply the information intellect has been trying to bring out through analysis and compilation of the data thus collected and then by drawing inferences from them.

Now, it is obvious that in a sphere where sensory organs are helpless: they cannot provide the basic data nor can furnish any information to base the conclusions or draw inferences; the most nimble and sharp intellect would be helpless in this matter much in the same way as a man trying to cross a sea without a ship or trying to fly without an aeroplane. Nobody howsoever brilliant can solve mathematical equations without first learning the numerals nor a man can read any writing without mastering the alphabets and script of a language. The same is true of recondite realities beyond the ken of human perception because intellect does not possess even the primary data that can enable it to hazard its guess in these matters.

Another salient fact to be kept in mind is that human intellect has a limited range beyond which it cannot go. Likewise all the sensory organs of man operate within a limited compass. Our vision or the faculty of seeing can be used to observe a thousand things but not to hear even one sound: the same is the case with other sensory organs which work under a limited sphere typical to each of them. The intellect and sensory organs have not been endowed with an unlimited power.

The scope and reach of intellect is apparently wider than that of other sensory organs but it has its own limits. Ibn Khaldūn has given a very apt illustration to show the limited scope of intellect.

> "The mind is an accurate scale, whose recordings are certain and reliable; but to use it to weigh questions relating to the Unity of God, or the afterlife, or the nature of prophecy, or of the divine qualities, or other such subjects falling outside its range, is like trying to use a goldsmith's scale to weigh mountains. This does not mean that the scale is in itself inaccurate.

"The truth of the matter is that mind has limits within which it is rigidly confined; it cannot therefore hope to comprehend God and His qualities; itself being only one of the many atoms created by God."[1]

There is yet another fact, conceded now, that the intellect cannot give its verdict independently and objectively with complete impartiality. Those who have studied the working of intellect know that there is nothing like 'pure intellect'. Attitudes and sentiments, dispositions and circumstances, the way it is groomed and disciplined, beliefs and fascinations, doubts and apprehensions and inattention and forgetfulness can hardly be shaken off by the intellect in the discharge of its function in a perfect and judicious manner as commonly believed by the people.

But, one is amazed to find that the philosophers have completely disregarded these significant facts in bringing their minds to bear upon the subjects like the nature and attributes of God and similar other matters without possessing even the rudimentary information about them. They have investigated and discussed these issues with the self-confidence of a chemist who makes his experiments to test the properties of different chemicals. The fact of the matter is that the theories and discussions of such philosophers are no better than fantasies and fables or the fairy tales of metaphysics of which a few samples will be cited later on.

Theosophy is another method of attaining the knowledge of God just the other way round but similar to that adopted by intellectualism and philosophy. Its guiding principle is that intellect, learning and reasoning faculties block the way instead of opening the door to the discovery of ultimate truth. It considers the vision of Ultimate Reality necessary for attaining its knowledge, and this can be had through self-purification,

1. *An Arab Philosophy of History* (Selections from the Prolegomena of Ibn Khaldun of Tunis), Tr. Charles Issawi, London, 1950, p. 166

illumination of the spirit and developing an inner sense which can perceive the spiritual realities and metaphysical truths in the same way as eyes can see material objects. This sense is developed, according to them, when the earthly nature of man and his outer faculties or senses are completely suppressed and subdued. Thus the spiritual cognition of reality is possible only through the pure and unmixed intellect and inward illumination which are produced by penance and self-mortification aided by meditation and contemplation.

It is true that man possesses an internal faculty to perceive higher realities. In fact, there may be a few more similar faculties and senses but all of them are no more than human faculties—weak, limited, fallible and impressionable. Like the bodily senses and faculties, the sources of acquiring knowledge through sensory impressions, there is always the likelihood of committing a mistake or getting a deceptive impression through this inner sense also. Had it not been so, the ecstatic intuitions and spiritual inspirations of the theosophists and mystics would not have differed so widely in their impressions of what they deem to be the Truth or Reality. Such differences are common among the Muslim and non-Muslim mystics.[1]

In any case, there is nothing like 'pure intellect': like the ordinary faculty of reasoning, the inner intellect is also impressed by external observations and perceptions and touched by internal passions and affections; and hence it cannot be expected to reflect the true image of a thing without any possibility of mistake. Similarly, the beliefs and surroundings of the mystics and theosophists colour their spiritual perceptions and that is why we find in the observations of neo-Platonic mystics the traces of Greek and Egyptian superstitions. The ideas that sometime appear to them as realities during their ecstatic transports cannot be treated as anything more

1. See the author's book *Religion and Civilization*, specially the chapter on 'Mysticism'.

than the product of their imaginations, devoid of any reality or existence outside their minds.[1]

Metaphysical questions are outside the reach of mysticism just as philosophy cannot be expected to solve them. Theosophy[2] or illuminism affords a glimpse of the spiritual world; certain figures and colours are seen and some mental impressions of articulate or inarticulate sounds are heard but they leave one as unenlightened of the Will and Pleasure of God, the divine law and the life and stages of the hereafter as any other man pretending to be wise in his own conceit.

The fact of the matter is that philosophy and theosophy are cast in the same mould: the spirit underlying both of them is one and the same. Both want to attain the ultimate reality without the agency of prophethood; the destination of both is the same; one wants to reach it with the wing of its imagination while the other desires to get at it through a spiritual tunnel of inner faculties.

The knowledge of Infinite Being can, however, be attained only from the messengers of God who are invested with the mantle of prophecy and initiated into the secret of God's nature and attributes, and the kingdom of heavens and the earth. God communicates His commandments to them, tells them of His likes and dislikes, and makes them intermediaries between Him and other human beings. They are, in truth and reality, the greatest blessing of God, since they make available that invaluable knowledge which cannot be acquired through years of philosophical deliberations or mystical meditations and penance and self-purification. In the words of the Qur'ān, *This is of the bounty of Allah unto us and unto mankind; but most men give not thanks.*[3]

1. See *Religion and Civilization* for a detailed account of it.
2. Theosophy in its original sense, before the recent movement in the beginning of this century distorted it to mean a pseudo-spiritualist movement.
3. Q. XII: 38

In very truth, most men give not thanks, and the philosophers and theosophists are those ungrateful folks who ignore the bounties of God made available to them in the shape of blessed messengers of God by depending on their own efforts to attain the reality they could have got for nothing. But what has been the result of their labour spread over hundreds of years? Instead of coming nearer to the Truth they have gone farther away from it: deluded by their hazy and contradictory researches, they have brought forth merely rediculous propositions and incredulous sophistications—*Beholdest thou not those who returned the favour of Allah with infidelity and caused their people to alight in the dwelling of perdition.*[1]

Mujaddid had a thorough knowledge of philosophy and mysticism but he was also cognizant of the worth and merit of prophetic attainments. He expounded the fallacies of philosophers and mystics by critically analysing their mistaken propositions which not only showed his deep knowledge of these disciplines but also provided the base for his reformative endeavour. For the entire system of religious thought and attainment of spiritual cognition depends on the question of source of knowledge about the nature and attributes of God; on it rests the man's understanding of his own beginning and end and the path of virtue to be taken by him for his salvation. Can it be had through speculation and meditation, as claimed by philosophy, or through penance, self-mortification and inner enlightenment, as asserted by the mystics and theosophists, or else can it be achieved through faith and following the path of the prophets of God? This is really the starting point for having vision of the truth and reality of things but the path taken to achieve it goes into three directions which never meet again: *Verily this is My path, straight; follow it then, and follow not other ways; that will deviate you from His way. Thus He enjoineth you,*

1. Q. XIV: 28

that haply ye may fear God.[1]

Mujaddid's writing on the subject, showing his deep insight into the matter, are scattered in his numerous letters. Some of these are arranged here under apporpriate headings.

Limitation of Intellect and the Knowledge of Omnipotent Creator

"Thanks be to Allah that He graciously led us to Islam and made us a follower of Muhammad (peace be upon him). The prophets of God (on whom be peace) are a blessing of God to humanity since it was through these prophets that God instructed us, possessing a limited and imperfect intellect, about His nature and attributes. He acquainted us of His quintessence, taking due care of the inadequacy of our understanding and told us of His likes and dislikes along with the things detrimental or beneficial for us in this world and the hereafter. Had these intermediaries not been there between us and God, human intellect would have failed to demonstrate the existence of omnific Creator of the world and had also been helpless in determining His competence and power. The philosophers of antiquity prided in their wisdom but denied the existence of the Creator of this universe, and attributed the occurrence of everything to time which shows their gross ignorance. The discourse about the Lord of heavens and the earth between Abraham (peace be upon him) and Nimrod, which finds a mention in the Qur'ān, is known to one and all. Similarly, Pharaoh had told the chiefs of Egypt, "I know not of a God for you except me,"[2] and threatened Moses (peace be upon him), "If thou wilt take a god other than me, I shall place thee among the prisoners."[3] That foolish king even commanded one of his ministers, "Wherefore kindle (fire)

1. Q. VI: 154
2. Q. XXVIII: 38
3. Q. XXVI: 29

thou for me, O Hāmān, to bake the mud ; and set up for me a lofty tower in order that I may survey the god of Mūsā ; and lo ! I deem him of the liars".[1] Thus, to be brief, intellect is incapable of ascertaining the existence of the Ultimate Reality and nothing save the guidance by the messengers of God can help one to attain the knowledge about Him."[2]

Stupidity of Greek Philosophers

The expositions of Greek philosophers about the Lord and Creator of the universe, known to them as the First Cause, and their cosmogony offer two of the best examples of the flight of imagination of these philosophers who have built castles in the air on the basis of lame and impotent surmises. The details in this regard can be seen in the philosophical treatises or the books on creed and dialectics *(kalām)* since the limited compass of this work would not permit this issue to be discussed here in detail or to elucidate their paradoxes.

However, in order to appreciate the view-point of the Mujaddid and the reason for his trenchant criticism of the fantastic assumptions and inferences drawn by the Greek philosophers, we deem it proper to give here the ontological hierarchy of these philosophers which is closely bound to their cosmological sciences of genesis and command. Voluminous treatises exist for and against these hypothesis but it would be sufficient to mention here this hierarchy alone.

The First Cause or the Necessary Being is a Unity. Since it is an accepted fact that from Unity only unity can come into being, and the universe is composed of different matters, the latter cannot emanate from the former. The existence of the First Cause, however, generates Intellection, without its knowledge, will or direction, just as a lamp diffuses light and the shadow accompanies man. Thus,

1. Q. XXVIII: 38
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 33

the First Intellect is contingent in essence but it has neither substantiality nor a tangible mass. It has the knowledge of its essence and the Necessary Being: it may be called an angel or First Intellect or may be known by any other name; yet its being contingent in essence gives rise to the Second Intellect, the soul of the Heaven of heavens (the ninth heaven) and its body. The Second Intellect generates in a similar manner the Third Intellect, the soul of the heaven of Zodiac and its body. Then, the Third Intellect brings about the Fourth Intellect, the soul of the planetary sphare of Saturn and its body. The Fourth Intellect, in its turn, produces the Fifth Intellect, known as the soul of the sphere of Jupiter and its body. The Fifth Intellect likewise brings on the Sixth Intellect, the soul of the sphere of Mars and its body. The Sixth Intellect opens the door to Seventh Intellect, the soul of the sphere of Sun and its body. The Seventh Intellect gives birth to the Eighth Intellect, the sphere of Venus and its body. The Eighth Intellect sets afloat the Ninth Intellect, the sphere of Mercury and its body. Finally, the Ninth Intellect gives birth to the Tenth Intellect, the sphere of Moon and its body. This last Intellection known as the Active Intellect causes the stuffing of the lunar planetary sphere with matter which gives rise to generation and corruption owing to the interaction of Active Intellect and the nature of planetary spheres. The elements combine in different ways owing to the motion of planets and thus they give origin to different vegetations and animals. These are the ten Intellections and nine heavens.

This hierarchy actually represents the mythology of the Greeks which was designated as philosophy and metaphysics. Later on, people started giving thought to it and started discussing, in all seriousness, whether this anatomy of being implied some philosophical truth or it was merely a figment of imagination. This, by the way, reminds one of the Qur'ānic

verses which says:

> "I made them not to witness the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor their own creation; nor choose I misleaders for (My) helpers."[1]

Imām Ghazzālī is perfectly correct in his assertion that this ontological hierarchy is simply an illogical assumption or rather darkness within darkness. He further says that if anybody starts describing his dream in similar terms it would be construed as his madness.[2]

At another place he writes, "I wonder how such things can be accepted by the philosophers who are inclined to hair-splitting of every issue, for, these explanations can hardly satisfy even a man out of his wits."[3]

The philosophers have negated the perfection and attributes of God in regard to creation of beings, making Him an impotent and dormant Divine Essence, supposedly for establishing transcedence and glorification of the Necessary Being. Imām Ghazzālī goes on further to say that:

> "Anybody who is satisfied about the position of God thus determined by this proposition, he verily assigns Him an status even lower to that of a being having knowledge of its own essence; for, a being having cognizance of its own essence and of others would be definitely on a higher plane than the one which has the awareness of its own essence only. This quibbling in showing reverence to God drove these men to twist the meaning of reverence and perverted the very sense of the word, making it to signify an inactive and dormant Being, unaware of what was happening in the world. The only difference is that He has the knowledge of His own essence (which is absent in the lifeless objects). Allah chastises those who

1. Q. XVIII: 52
2. *Tahāfat ul-Falāsifah*, p. 30
3. *Ibid.*, p. 33

go astray from the right path shown by Him; they overlook that God has said, "*I made them not to witness the creation of the heavens and the earth.*" They mistrust God; for, they entertain the belief that the Truth and Essence of the Supreme Being can be fathomed by human senses. These are the persons who are proud of their intellectual capacities and hold the view that a man endowed with intellect need not follow the prophets and their adherents. The net result is that they have ultimately to acknowledge the conclusions drawn from those philosophies which, however, boil down to something that is bewildering even in the form of a dream."[1]

All these aberrations recall to our mind the worth and grace of prophethood—*we could not truly have been led aright if Allah had not guided us.*[2] This illustration provides an unequivocal example of the inadequacy of intellect and the failure of philosophers in solving the questions of metaphysics although they have made their mark in the field of mathematics and other physical sciences. It is hard to believe how they conceived the Supreme Being as an existence dormant and helpless and having no knowledge except of His own Essence—the characteristics they would not like to be attributed to their own selves or even to a lower creation.

"Glorified be thy Lord, the Lord of Majesty,
From that which they attribute (unto Him),
And peace be unto those sent (to warn),
And praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds!"[3]

Now let us cast a glance on the writings of the Mujaddid on this subject, extracted from his different letters.

"Had Intellect been adequate to comprehend God, the Greek philosophers who had set up reason as the

1. *Tahāfat-ul-falāsifah*, p. 31
2. Q. VII: 43
3. Q. XXXVII: 180 182

sole guiding principle would not have roved in the valley of infidelity and unbelief; they would have rather been more cognizant of the Pure Being than others. But they happened to be the most un-enlightened fellows in regard to the nature and attributes of God. They took the Divine Being to be inert and ineffectual and held that nothing emanated from Him save the Active Intellect. And, even the Active Intellect had, of itself, diffused from Him as a necessary consequence and not because of His active desire or will. These philosophers thus invented the Active Intellect to which they diverted the role of producing events and accidents in the world from the Creator of the heavens and the earth. They took out the consequence from the Ultimate Cause and assigned it to what they had concocted. They held the view that the consequence ensued from the nearest cause and the Causing Cause had nothing to do with the resultant eventuality. They considered, in their foolishness, that unaccountability of God for the sequence of events was the mark of His perfection and regarded His inertness and ineffectiveness as His glorification despite the fact that God calls Himself the Lord of the East and the Lord of the West.

"These empty-headed persons had presumed that they need not have a God, nor it was necessary to supplicate and pray to Him. They ought to have beseeched Active Intellect in the hour of their need and invoked its blessings for solving their difficulties, for, in their opinion, the real authority and power vested in it. Or, rather, Active Intellect had also no choice but to function according to the role assigned to it. It was, therefore, inappropriate to beseech the Active Intellect too for the fulfilment of their needs. The fact of the matter is that, as stated by the Qur'ān, *'the disbelievers have no patron'*,[1] neither God nor

1. Q. XLVII: 11

Active Intellect. What is this Active Intellect, after all? It manages all the affairs of the world and to it are attributed all occurrances and events. But, its existence is also questionable since it depends on philosophical hypotheses which are incorrect and incomplete in themselves according to the Islamic doctrine of inference. It is foolish to ascribe the existence of all creations to a supposed and unprovable thing rather than to the All-Powerful and Absolute Being. It will, in fact, be degrading for the creations to trace their existence to something unsubstantial and illusory, a thing invented by philosophy; they would rather like to fade away and come to naught than take pleasure in their existence through a fatuous nihility and thus be deprived of their connection with the Almighty Supreme Being. *Dreadfull is the word that cometh out of their mouths; they speak not but a lie.*[1] Disbelievers belonging to a country of infidels who worship idols are wiser than these philosophers for the former at least beseech God in the hour of difficulty and seek the intercession of their deities to send up their prayers to the Supreme Being.

"Still more amazing is the attitude of those who regard these blockheaded persons as philosophers and paragons of wisdom and trace all knowledge to them. Most of their propositions, particularly those relating to metaphysics are wrong and opposed to the Divine Scripture and Traditions of the Prophet. How can they be called men of wisdom; except, of course, in a sarcastic way, such as, one addresses a blind man as clear-eyed."[2]

Inadequacy of Intellect to Perceive Spiritual Realities

"Thanks be to God who guided us on the right path for we would have never walked the straight path if He

1. Q. XVIII: 5
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 23 to Khwāja Ibrāhīm Qabādyānī

had Himself not provided us guidance. Verily, the prophets of God came with truth. How can we express our gratitude to God for sending His messengers to us; how can we truly affirm our trust in the greatest Benefactor and how can we find the strength to be good and virtuous in order to render our thanks to Him? Had these blessed souls not been sent to us, who would have helped us to comprehend the existence and Unity of the Maker of heavens and earth? The Greek philosophers of antiquity, though sharp-witted, could not find their way to the existence of the Creator of this universe and attributed the origin of things to *dahr* (time). As the prophetic call gradually became stronger, the later philosophers rejected the propositions of their ancient predecessors and affirmed the existence as well Unity of the Creator. This, in itself, shows that our intellect is helpless in this matter and our understanding would remain deficient without prophetic help."[1]

Prophethood transcends Intellect and Discursive Reasoning

"Prophethood transcends intellect and the methods of reasoning. Matters which are beyond the ken of intellect or human perception are proved by the prophetic method. Had human intellect been sufficient to show light of guidance to man, there would have been no need for God to send His apostles (peace be on all of them), nor the chastisement in the hereafter would have been prescribed as punishment for rejecting them. God tells us: *We never punish until we have sent a messenger.*[2] Reason furnishes a proof, no doubt, but its testimony is neither final nor perfect. Authenticated attestation is provided only by prophethood after which there remains nothing more to

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 259 to Khwājā Muhammad Sa'eed
2. Q. XVII: 15

be searched for. In the words of God these are the *'messengers of good cheer and warning, in order that mankind might have no argument against Allah after the messengers. Allah was ever Mighty, Wise.'*[1] For the inadequacy of reflective power to comprehend certain matters has been an established fact, it would be fallacious to weigh all the commandments of the *sharī'ah* in its scale; to make the *sharī'ah* concordant with the judgement of intellect would amount to denial of the prophethood. We seek the refuge of God from it."[2]

Pure Intellect is a Myth

The writ of philosophy reigned supreme throughout the world, and specially in Irān and India, during the tenth century (sixteenth century A.D.) which leaned heavily upon the Greek philosophy. Plato and Aristotle were taken as the two infallible masters of logic and philosophy; anything established through Aristotelian logic or simply the citation of these masters in one's support was enough to reduce one's adversary to silence. Mujaddid was the first Muslim thinker, as far as we are aware, who affirmed that the existence of pure and unmixed intellect completely detached from one's circumstances, current prejudices, ideas and theological origins or even one's predilections and sentiments was beyond the bounds of possibility. He demonstrated that the so-called pure intellect could not attain the knowledge of Truth in an objective manner even if it was assisted by inner enlightenment and self-purification for no one could ever claim to be completely emancipated from one's indwelling and extraneous impressions, training and instruction and the notions that had been ingrained as a part of one's intangible heritage of thought and feelings. His letters speak of his courage in enunciating

1. Q. IV : 165
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 36 to Mīr Muhammad Nomān.

his proposition in an age when superiority of intellect and philosophic disquisitions through hypothesis and verification dominated the scene. His discovery was also striking which required a detailed examination for ascertaining its significance, yet it has perhaps still not been attempted by anybody.

It is a strange coincidence that after about two hundred years of the Mujaddid's findings on this subject, the famous German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724—1804) inaugurated a new era in philosophical speculation by adopting a critical method for examining the working of reasoning faculty and the nature of pure or abstract intellect. His great work, the *Critique of Pure Reason*, published in 1781, dealt a death blow to speculative dogmatism. In the words of Sir Muhammad Iqbal the *Critique of Pure Reason* revealed "the limitation of human reason and reduced the whole work of the rationalists to a heap of ruins."[1] Glowing tributes have been paid to this achievement of the western thought: some have even acclaimed Kant as the greatest blessing of God for the German nation. Dr. Harold Hoffding writes in the *History of Modern Philosophy* that Kant's Critique is "an immortal masterpiece of philosophy, a work which stands as a milestone in the long wanderings of human thought."[2]

In Kant's view, "thought sets to work *dogmatically*, i.e., with involuntary, frequently naive, confidence in its own powers and in the vitality of its own assumption. Hence it believes itself able to solve all problems and to penetrate to the innermost nature of the world. This is the age of great systems. Later comes a time in which it appears that these thought-constructions cannot reach the heavens, and that the architects cannot agree as to their plan. This is the age of doubt, of *scepticism*.

1. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Delhi, 1975, p. 5
2. Dr. Harold Hoffding, *A History of Modern Philosophy*, Vol. II, (London, 1935), p. 37

Men mock at these futile attempts with their contradictions, and console themselves half sadly, half cynically, with what appears to be an absolutely negative result. This is a natural reaction against blind dogmatism. Kant attacks both these tendencies. He found one task which had been neglected by dogmatists and sceptics alike, i.e., the enquiry into the nature of our intellect and our knowledge itself, with a view to discovering what forms and powers we have at our disposal for the comprehension of things, and how far these forms and powers can take us."[1]

Let us now turn to the Muslim scholar and thinker preceding western rationalism by several centuries who was brought up in the limited and traditional pedagogic atmosphere of India and who preferred to pursue the religious disciplines instead of applying his mind to liberal pursuits of logic and philosophy. Avoiding the pedantic jargon of philosophy, he explained the limits of intellect in an easy and simple language. The Mujaddid raises the question: Intellect being imperfect and inadequate to attain the gnosis of Ultimate Reality, why can it not create a link for the vision of the sought-for Truth with the help of self-purification and the unveiling of the inner spirit so as to achieve an understanding of divine knowledge and His commands for which we need prophethood and the angelic intermedium?

Then answering this question he writes:

> "Whatever connecting link and cohesion is created by intellect with the Divine Principle, its affiliation with the bodily existence can never be severed completely nor can it achieve complete freedom by tearing apart its cementation with the corporeal body. Doubt remains yoked to it; imagination is fastened to its thoughts; anger and desire are blended with it; greed and avarice are its constant companions; while human shortcomings like forgetfulness, faultiness and misjudgement never part company with it.

1. Dr. Harold Hoffding, *A History of Modern Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 30

Thus, Intellect cannot be relied upon and its findings are not impervious to its doubtfulness, immaturity and imagination. Nor can they be considered free of its misjudgements and miscalculations. Contrarily, the angels are unhampered by these handicaps and, therefore, reliance can be placed on them. The knowledge transmitted by them is unencumbered by the mixture of human imagination, doubt and mistake. Sometimes it so happens that the spirit apprehends the Divine Principle through its internal experience but certain postulates and *a priori* principle mistakenly taken as correct by the mental operations of the brain, get mixed up with such apprehensions without making the mystic aware of their contamination. Another time, one is able to make a distinction between the two; but very often one is denied that privilege. However, the admixture of these extraneous matters in the spiritual experiences makes them essentially uncertain and inaccurate which cannot be depended upon."[1]

Neo-Platonists and Illuminists

Illumination of the spirit has been regarded as an unerring and dependable source of acquiring knowledge and certitude, regulation of ethical conduct, purification of the self and creation of a just social order. Egypt and India were its two great centres in antiquity. This school of thought owes its popularity to the reaction against excessive intellectualism and the resultant carnalmindedness which was first set afloat in Greece and Rome but later on flourished at Alexandria, the great converging centre of eastern and western thoughts and religions. The propagators of this school claimed that the most important source of acquiring knowledge and certitude was spiritual perception which could be developed by inner illumination, self-purification and contemplation. It helped to

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 266 to Khwāja 'Abdullah and Khwāja 'Ubaid Ullah.

acquire, according to them, Pure Intellect which created a direct connection between man and the world-soul through an inner perception of the Reality.

This principle pre-supposes the existence of an additional internal faculty, in addition to the five human senses, which can be quickened to perceive luminant objects, sounds and facts not perceived through the five senses. But there is nothing to warrant the supposition that this additional sense is not limited like the other outward senses or that it cannot commit mistakes like them in its apprehensions. Had this additional sense been unerring, its findings would have been free from contrasts and contradictions; nor there would have been any possibility of doubt or uncertainty in its perceptions. However, the history of theosophy bears a witness to the fact that the perception of the theosophists are as much inconsistent and conflicting as the speculative thoughts of Greek philosophers or other eastern rationalists. Aside from mysticism of the old whose history is mixed up with legends, let us take the example of conflicting beliefs and religious practices of neo-Platonist precursors. Plotinus (A. D. 203—262) was a free-thinker who rejected the religious beliefs and rituals of his time and laid emphasis on contemplation and meditation instead of devotional exercises. His disciple, Porphyry (A. D. 233—305) was, however, a moralist and a mystic. Porphyry believed in the re-birth of human soul in the shape of animals but Plotinus rejected that idea. Proclus (A. D. 412—485) was another celebrated teacher of neo-Platonic school. He punctually observed the then Egyptian religious devotions, and the reverence with which he honoured the sun and moon were unbounded. Yet, all the three believed in the inner spiritual perception of the Truth.[1]

The ecstatic experiences of Muslim mystics having complete reliance on mysticism and its capacity to reveal spiritual truths

1. See 'Neo-Platonism' in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.*

beyond common understanding, also show numerous inconsistencies like other theosophists. We find one mystic contradicting the exalted preception of the other experienced during an ecstatic transport, condemning it as intoxication (*sukr*) or insanity of experience (*ghalba-i-hāl*). The intellections having no extrinsic existence save in the minds and works of the philosophers are often reported to shake hands with those mystics who acknowledge the existence of hierarchical Intellects. The history of mysticism is replete with similar examples.

Shaikhul Ishrāq Shihāb-ud-dīn Suhrawardī

Shaikh Shihāb-ud-dīn Yahyā Suhrawardī (549-587 A.H.)[1] also known as Shaikh-ul-Ishrāq (Master of Illumination) and the *maqtūl* (executed)[2] achieved considerable renown among the Muslim mystics of 6th/12th century. He was executed under the orders of Al-Malik-ul-Zāhir in 587/1191 for holding heterodox views which ran counter to the accepted creed of Islam. Suhrawardī declared himself a peripatetic and a sufi. "One finds in Suhrawardī alongwith peripatetic ideas", writes S. V. Den Bergh, "all that mystic philosophy...obtained from Hellenistic syncretism, all the mixture of neo-Platonic doctrines, Hermetic theories, occult sciences, Gnostic traditions and neo-Pythagorean elements". According to Bergh, who contributed the article on Suhrawadī in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, the cornerstone of his philosophy of *ishrāq* (illumination) was really borrowed from the neo-Platonic view of light which was regarded as the fundamental reality of things.[3]

Shams-ud-dīn Muhammad al-Shahrzūri writes that Suhrawardī mixed up speculative philosophy with gnostic theosophy. His most important work was the *Hikmat-il-Ishrāq* on which

1. A.D. 1154-1191
2. This distinguishes him from the martyr or *shahīd*, because of his heretical views.
3. *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol. IV, *Art.* Suhrawardī, Shihāb-ud-dīn.

the commentary written by Qutb-ud-dīn Shīrāzī as *Sharh Hikmat--il-Isrāq* achieved considerable popularity in the educational and intellectual circles.

Suhrawardī holds that the intellections are not limited to ten for there is an Intellect for each and every species. He gives them the name of *anwār-i-mujarradah* or abstract illuminations. Each abstract illumination stands guard over its particular species. The sky is a living creature, according to Suhrawardī, and hence it has an abstract soul which brings it into motion. The sky, which is protected against change and disintegration, possesses the sentient soul (*al-nafs al-nātiqāh*) and therefore it is in possession of other senses also. The sky is even a sentient being according to Suhrawardī. The Absolute Light casts its effect on everything through the stars and this causes motion in human faculties. The largest among the stars is sun which is paid a reverential regard by the illuminists. The cosmos is, by itself and through several intermediaries, governed by Absolute Light whereby it is manifested and brings all things into existence. Heat and motion are generated by light and thus fire is the greatest repository of both the attributes and elements. Just as the *nafs* (soul) illuminates the *'ālam-i-arwāh* (world of spirits), fire illuminates the *'ālam-i-ajsām* (corporeal world). God has appointed a vicegerent for every world; in the world of intellections it is the First Intellect; in the celestial world these are the stars and their souls; in the world of elements it consists of the human soul, while the radiations of the stars and fire, in particular, plan and manage the affairs of the world. *Khilāfat-i-kubrā* or the greater vicegerency is allotted to the perfect souls of the prophets while the *khilāfat-i-sughrā* i.e., the lesser vicegerency belongs to fire since it deputises for the sublime light and the rays of the stars during the night and causes foodstuff and other vegetations to ripen. Suhrawardī held the world to be uncreated and time to be eternal and everlasting. The transmigration of soul was neither affirmed

nor rejected by him since he did not find the arguments for and against that proposition sufficiently adequate to clinch the issue.[1]

This was the illustrious man of intellect known to the east as Master of Illumination. His intelligence, depth of knowledge and piety were recognised by his contemporaries but his mysticism alongwith self-purification, meditation and contemplation could not unmask the fallacies of the Greek and Magian philosophastry. He abjured the knowledge of Truth as well as the message of good cheer for this world and the next, brought by the last of the prophets, opted for an unbalanced, discomposed aud unsuccessful life and departed from the world without leaving any guidance or direction for the social good of the humanity.

Similarity of Intellect and Spiritual Illumination

Kant suspected the existence of pure intellect and set forth evidence to show that it could neither be unmixed nor emancipated from subjective and non-subjective experiences and impressions. Yet, being uninitiated with the world of spirit, he could not go beyond the intellect. The Mujaddid, on the other hand, was no stranger to the interior experiences of spirit and therefore he had no difficulty in making a headway to the esoteric plane. He demonstrated that the existence of pure or infallible spiritual illumination and inspiration were almost impossible. He afforded proof that the effort to attain the knowledge of Ultimate Reality with the help of self-purification and illumination of the spirit was nothing more than an attempt to attain the impossible. The facts of mute reality pertaining to the world beyond the range of human perception can be known by all, the elite and the commoner, through the apostles

1. For a detailed description see the *Hukamā'l Islām*, Vol. II, by 'Abdus Salām Nadwi.

of God who are sent, in reality, for guiding the people to the knowledge of Truth and the path of virtue as well as for purification of morals and spirits necessary for salvation in the hereafter.

Let us now turn to letters of the Mujaddid on this subject:

"These unwise sages (*hukamā*) took to penance and prayer following the lead of the illuminists and rejected the teachings of the prophets. They relied on purification of the self and fanciful ecstatic experiences: they went astray and seduced others. They were not aware that their self-purification really led to waywardness; it was different from the purification of heart which guides one to the right path. For the purification of heart depends upon the way of the prophets, the purification of self is a necessary outcome of the purification of heart—provided the heart is allowed to guide the self. The heart alone is capable of manifesting divine illumination. The purified self without cleansing of the heart is like a lamp lighted to allow ingress to one's surreptitious enemy or Satan bent upon to devastate one's house.

"In short, devotions and vigils produce the conviction and absolute trust only when they are ratified by the prophets (peace be on them) who preach the message of God. Succour of God comes to the aid of the prophets. The system of apostleship enjoys the protection of angels who are themselves shielded against the intrigues of a furtive enemy like Satan. God says about them: *Lo! as for My slaves; thou hast no power over any of them.*"[1] This protection is not afforded to others nor can one guard oneself against the accursed Satan unless one follows in the footsteps of the noble prophets. S'adī has truly said that the path of peace and virtue cannot be found without following the lead of Muhammad, on whom be peace and blessings of

1. Q. XV:42

God, and his progeny and all the prophets be blessed by God."[1]

Impurities in Ecstatic Experiences

"One must understand that the ecstatic experiences are not misled by satanic suggestions alone. It sometimes happens that figmental and fanciful notions are stored in one's mind; Satan has no access to the quarters where they are stored; yet they come out of the sub-conscious symbolised in a human form. This is how certain persons who claim to have a vision of the Prophet attribute things to him not permitted by the *shari'ah*. Such cases cannot be regarded as inspirations from Satan since he cannot appear, according to the scholors, in the shape of the holy Prophet. These cases represent creations of the brain which mislead certain persons to take something for granted although they have no basis for it."[2]

In another letter he writes :

"Even if a soul is converted through self-purification into a wholly contented soul (*nafs-i-mutma'yinnah*) it cannot be completely expurgated of its inherent characteristics with the result that mistaken notions can find a way into it "[3]

Conflict between the teachings of Philosophers and Prophets

Shaikh Ahmad also points out the self-evident discordance between the teachings of the prophets and philosophers which has persisted for centuries since the two are irreconcilable. The brainworks of the philosophers are, in his view, nothing more than lashing the waves. He says :

"The imperfect intellect of the philosophers is completely at variance with that of the prophets in conceiving

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 34 to Khāwāja Ibrāhīm Qabādyānī
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 107 to Muhammad Sādiq of Kashmīr
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, No. 41 to Shaikh Darwaysh

the genesis of the world and the hereafter. Their deliberations and discussions clash with the teachings of the prophets; they have no faith in the afterlife and think that the world is uncreated although there is a consensus among all the religions that it is contingent. Similarly, they are not convinced that on the Doomsday the sky will be rent asunder, stars will be blown up, mountains will split into pieces and the oceans will overflow as foretold by God; nor do they believe that all human beings will be revived again on that Day. They deny the events specified in the Qur'ān. The philosophers of the later times confess that they are Muslims, but they are also wedded to these very philosophical doctrines. They are convinced that the sky and the stars and similar other things are eternal which will never come to naught. Their food for thought consists of the denial of Quranic teachings and rejection of the religious creed. What sort of believers they are who affirm their faith in God and His apostles yet reject everything taught by them. There can hardly be anything more idiotic than this. A poet made a correct assessment of philosophy when he said that since it involved sophistry, the whole of it represented fallacious reasoning.

"The philosophers had devoted their whole lives to mastering the principles of logic or correct use of reasoning so as to save themselves from committing mistakes. They took great pains in learning these principles but the moment they started applying their mind to the nature and attributes of the Ultimate Reality, they gave up the science of reasoning and began beating about the bush. They have gone astray like the man who kept himself busy in amassing the munitions of war for long years but lost his heart as soon as the conflict started.

"These are the people who consider philosophy to be very systematic and methodical discipline, accurate and

faultless. Even if their claim were accepted, it would be true only in the case of those sciences for which intellectual capacity alone is sufficient to comprehend the matter under enquiry. But this is not the case here. This science is neither relevant nor useful to the issues like everlasting afterlife or salvation in the hereafter. Here we mean the knowledge that cannot he reached through intellect; this knowledge is assuredly dependent on the prophetic way and on it rests the final salvation.....Logic is a device helpful to other discursive sciences, showing an infallible way to the correct method of reasoning. But it was of no help to them in finding the Ultimate Truth. How can this science help others when it has already failed these persons? One ought to entreat God:

> *"Our Lord! Suffer not our hearts to deviate after Thou hast guided us, and bestow on us from Thine presence mercy. Verily Thou;! Thou art the Bestower."*[1]

"Those who are half-learned in philosophy are not unoften misguided by its sophism and take the philsophers as the seers and sages and contenders of the prophets of God. Some of them would be willing even to give preference to the postulates of the philosophers, no matter whether they be incorrect, over the commandments of God expounded by the prophets, who may all be blessed by God. May God save us from such misguided beliefs. Thus, all those who consider the philosophers as men of intellect and their formulations as wisdom are necessarily led astray. For wisdom consists of the knowledge of reality of things, this misguided lot rejects the knowledge of truth brought by the prophets simply because it is in conflict with the comprehensions of the philosophers.

"In brief, the acceptance of philosophers and their rationalisations amount to rejection of the prophets and

1. Q. III: 8

their teachings. This is because the philosophers and apostles of God are diametrically opposed to each other; acceptance of one presupposes the rejection of the other. Now, it is open to everyone to have faith in the prophets and become a believer and one of those who are saved or to join the company of the philosophers and consort with the devil, accursed and condemned. Says the Lord of the world:

> *"Then whosoever will, let him believe, and whosoever will, let him disbelieve. Lo! We have prepared for disbelievers Fire. Its tent encloseth them. If they ask for showers, they will be showered with water like to molten lead which burneth the faces. Calamitous the drink and ill the resting-place!"*[1]

"Peace be on him who followed the guidance and the example of Holy Prophet. Peace and blessings be also on Muhammad and other prophets and the angels of God."[2]

Purification Unattainable without Prophethood

"That the purification and embellishment of soul proceed from the divinely approved virtuous deeds, they ultimately depend on prophecy. Thus the gist of purification and freedom from evil cannot be had by any one without the help of the prophets."[3]

Indispensability of the Prophets

Shaikh Ahmad considers the prophets indispensable for guidance of humanity. Human intellect is, in his view, inadequate to lead man to the divine presence. He writes in a letter

1. Q. XVIII : 30
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 23, addressed to Khwāja Ibrāhīm Qabādyānī
3. *Ibid.* Vol. I, No. 266, addressed to Khwāja 'Abdullah and Khwāja 'Ubaid Ullah.

addressed to Khwājā 'Abdullah and Khwājā 'Ubaid Ullah.

"Apostleship is a blessing for mankind; for, without their assistance who could have enlightened it about the nature and attributes of God and made it to see the difference between the evil and the virtue? Our limited understanding is incapable of penetrating the Truth without the help of the prophets, nor it is able to find the path of virtue save by following their example.

"Intellect is no doubt verificative but it cannot provide absolute certainty nor its trustworthiness is incontestable. Absolute certainty is reached only through the prophets of God (on whom be peace); and on them depends eternal perdition and everlasting salvation."[1]

Divine Knowledge and Prophecy

"Prophethood is a blessing because it is through the prophets alone that man can approach the Divine Person, His nature and attributes, which comprise the source of all the excellence and grace of this world and the next. Prophethood imparts us the understanding of things agreeable and unsuited to His Sublime Existence. Since our limited and inadequate intellect is contingent and created, it has no comprehension of the uncreated First Principle nor it is aware of the attributes that are either becoming or unbecoming to it. Rather, the indequacy of Intellect often misleads one to attribute perfection to something deficient or to do just the other way round. The ability to distinguish between the two is to me the greatest of all internal and external gifts bestowed on man. Thus, unblest is the man who ascribes unseemly acts and objects to God's Exalted Person. It was prophethood which drew a line of demarcation between the truth and untruth and distinguished between what was fit to be paid divine rever-

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 266

ence and what was unfit for it. The apostles of God invite mankind to the Divine path because of prophethood which enables them to attain propinquity with Him. And, as already explained, the prophethood makes man aware of the commandments of God and gives the discernment of the permissible and impermissible, Likewise, there are many more gifts of prophethood which go to prove its blessedness. Prophethood loses none of its merits nor there is any blame on it if any one misguided by his carnal desires decides to follow the accursed Satan or rejects the teachings of the prophets."[1]

Gnosis of God : A Gift of Prophethood

"As the call and message of the prophets came to be known to the world through their continued preaching; even the ignoramuses doubting the existence of the Creator realised their mistake and found credence. Their acceptance of God as the Creator of all things and beings was brought about by the light and knowledge spread by the God's massengers. Peace and blessings of God be on them forever and aye.

"All the knowledge that has reached us through the prophets, as, for example, the perfection of the Divine Person and His attributes, prophethood, impeccability of the angels, retribution on the Day of reckoning, heaven and hell, the perpetual bliss of paradise, everlasting perdition of the hell and similar other matters spoken of by the *shari'ah*, could have never been discovered by the human intellect. It was, in reality, incapable of proving the truth of these grim realities by itself without the assistance of the prophets of God."[2]

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 266, addressed to Khwājā 'Abdullāh and 'Ubaid Ullah.
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 23, addressed to Khwājā Ibrāhīm Qabādyārī.

Stages of Faith

"First of all one should have faith in God's apostles and repose confidence in prophethood so that the heart is cleansed of darkness and articles of faith take hold of the mind. This is the fundamental principle of faith on which one should be firm and steadfast in order that one is able to put his trust in other dogmas and precepts of the creed. No system of belief can be made acceptable to anyone without first creating a trust in the core of that system.

"The easiest way to find credence and heart-felt conviction is the recollection of God. *Lo! in the remembrance of Allah hearts do find rest! Those who believe and do right: Joy for them, and a happy resort.*[1]

"A poet has correctly expressed this truth in these words:

"The logician stands on wooden legs,
But weak and unstable are the legs of wood."[2]

Acceptance of Prophethood based on Sound Reasoning

"One who follows the prophets after having satisfied oneself of the truth of prophethood really takes one's stand upon sound reasoning. Even his acceptance of the teachings of the prophets without asking for any confirmatory evidence is based on reason. It is like proving a major premiss with cogent arguments which validates the minor premiss on the same grounds. *Praise be to Allah, who has guided us to this. We could not truly have been led aright if Allah had not guided us. Verily the messengers of our Lord did bring the Truth.*"[3]

1. Q. XIII: 28-29
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 36, addressed to Mīr Muhammad N'omān.
3. Q. VII: 43, (*Ibid.*)

Prophetic Teachings not Verifiable by Intellect

"Verily the requital, balance and the path (to hell) are indisputable facts because the information about them was brought by the one most truthful. Denial of their existence by those who are ignorant of the station of prophethood is untenable because perception of the prophets goes beyond the ken of intellect. An attempt to verify the information brought by the prophets through the touchstone of intellect is, in fact, a denial of prophethood. These matters (of metaphysical reality) have to be accepted without any argumentation."[1]

Beyond Intellect and Irrationality

It should not be presumed that the prophetic procedure is irrational. On the contrary, the line of action adopted by intellect cannot approach the Divine Person without following the lead of the prophets. To be against reason or intellect is something quite different from that which cannot be comprised by intellect. Irrationality of any thought can be judged only after the intellect has comprehended its nature."[2]

Method of Worship taught by Prophets alone

"For the prophets provide guidance in the matter of thanksgiving to the Great Benefactor and teach man how to pay homage to Him in the way He desires, one cannot do without God's messengers. Divine service not performed in accordance with the direction given by Him is unbecoming of His great Majesty and Power but the faculties endowed to man are incapable of finding out its correct method. As man can even commit the mistake of being

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 266 addressed to Khwājā 'Abdullah and Khwājā 'Ubaid Ullah.
2. *Ibid.*

disrespectful in place of returning Him thanks, it becomes the duty of the prophets to let man know how to lift up his heart in adoration of God. The inspirations of the saintly persons are also drawn from the prophets on whose imitation depend all the blessings and divine grace dispensed to them."[1]

Prophethod Superior to Intellect

"Intellect occupies a position higher to senses because it can comprehend things not perceived by the senses. In a similar manner prophethood is superior in position and quality to the intellect since it can discern things not apprehended by the latter. Anyone who does not recognise any other means for acquisition of knowledge save intellect really denies the prophetic medium and the guidance made available through it."[2]

Station of Prophethood

Studious devotion of the scholars to Greek sciences and philosophy which were devoid of prophetic light yet regarded as the very essence of knowledge, on the one hand, and diligent engagement of the mystics in travails, vigils and penance uninformed by the *kitāb* and the *sunnah*, on the other, since the beginning of the eighth century after Hijrah, had given rise to a callous neglect or rather mental alienation from prophethood among the commonality. The lives of God's messengers including that of the last Prophet were looked down upon by the philosophers and theosophists as the profiles of common men who had spent their lives in a conventional manner; who had wives and children, earned their living as traders or by tending flocks, took part in battles and expressed their joys and sorrows in a familar way; who did not engage themselves in the so-called

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 23, addressed to Khwājā Ibrāhīm Qabādyānī
2. *Ibid.*

meritious devotional exercises meant for self-mortification as undertaken even by the ordinary mystics; and who paid greater attention to teaching and preaching to others rather than to the prefection of their own souls. The mystics of the day brought up in the neo-Platonist lore of spiritual states and ecstasy, clairvoyant illumination and union with the Divine Person as well as enamoured of a fascination for miraculous powers and hidden essence had come to hold the misconceived notion that since the preachings of God's message required diversion of attention from the mystic discipline, those who were perpetually engrossed in the perfection of spirit were on a higher plane than the prophets of God. Some, who were a bit more cautious in this regard, had propounded the view that sainthood was by itself not superior to prophethood but what they actually meant by it was that the state of sainthood was generally superior to pursuits of prophethood. They held that the prophets in communion with God were at a higher level than at the moment when they occupied themselves in their preaching mission. All these thoughts indicated the hold of misguided mysticism in the religious circles which was, in the final analysis, alienating the community of the believers from its original sources of prophethood and the *sharī'ah*. This was a great menace facing the Muslims which had to be encountered by the religious scholars, for they were the deputies of the prophets and were charged with the duty of reviving the spirit of true faith in the community.

Shaikh Sharaf-ud-din Yahyā Maneri (661-786 A.H.)[1] was perhaps the first mystic endowed with esoteric spiritual knowledge who had forcefully rejected this proposition in his letters.[2] He asserted that even the shortest spell of a prophet's life was infinitely superior than the entire life of any mystic or gnostic. The corporeal body of the prophets, he had maintained, could be compared with the head and heart of the most sublime mystic in a state of propinquity to God.

1. A.D. 1263-1384
2. See Saviours of Islamic Spirit, Vol. II.

The Mujaddid was the only luminary after Shaikh Sharaf-ud-dīn Yahyā Maneri who grasped this truth and demonstrated that the prophets were intellectually and spiritually the acme of spiritual perfection among the entire creation of God. He explained that their spiritual affinity with God was never severed by their diversion of attention to any matter whatsoever because their responsive hearts were opened by God to the secrets of truth and reality. This was a characteristic singular to them since the great task with which they were charged required brilliance and alertness of mind along with largeheartedness and fortitude not possessed by the illuminists and ecstatics. The prophets of God made the start where mystics and saints ended their journey of spirit; the former enjoyed nearness of God by virtue of the performance of duties allotted to them whereas the latter strived to approach it through voluntary devotions and prayers but could never attain that stage. The perfection of sainthood as compared to the quintessence of prophethood was like a drop beside the ocean. The extracts from Shaikh Ahmad's letters which follow indicate something of the sublimity and originality of his thought.

Prophets are the Best of Creations

"The prophets are the best of creations, endowed with the finest qualities. Sainthood is a fraction of what prophethood represents as a whole; the prophethood is thus by definition superior to sainthood. It follows from it that whether it be the sainthood of a prophet or a saint, the *sahw* (sobriety) surpasses *sukr* (intoxication). *Sahw* embodies *sukr* in the same way as prophethood encompasses sainthood. As for the alertness and wakefulness of the commonality, it is a sobriety of the plebeian type without any claim to primacy. But the sobriety which is inclusive of intoxication, does enjoy a pre-eminence over the latter. The knowledge pertaining to the *shari'ah* whose fountainhead is prophethood, qualifies to be called *sahw* (sobriety);

everything that comes in conflict with the *shari'ah* is *sukr* (intoxication). Those who are in an intoxicated state are rendered incompetent and so only the knowledge pertaining to sobriety deserves to be followed and not that dependent on intoxication."[1]

Openheartedness of the prophets

"Certain mystics transported upon the wings of intoxicated fervour have made the remark that the sainthood is better than prophethood. Others have, however, explained it as referring to the saintly aspect of the prophets so as to repudiate the absolute superiority of saints over the prophets. The fact, in any case, is just the reverse of it. The prophetic aspect of the apostles of God surpasses their sainthood. The saints being narrowhearted cannot devote their full attenion to their fellow beings while the concern of the prophets for human beings does not cause any obstruction to their absorbed attention to the Divine Beings. Nor their engrossment in God causes any difficulty in applying their mind to God's creations. The truth is that the prophets never devote their thoughts entirely to human beings in a way that the saints can claim any advantage over them. I take refuge in Allah, praise be to Him; undivided attention is the characteristic of common people while the prophets occupy a pre-eminently higher position than them. Those who are intoxicated by mystical fervour cannot understand the underlying reality of this assertion: it can verily be comprehended only by the gnostics who have attained the state of sobriety."[2]

Dual Attention of Prophets

"Some of the mystics who are more inclined to

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 95 to Saiyid Ahmad of Bijwāda.
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 108 to Saiyid Ahmad of Bijwāda.

remain in the state of mystical intoxication, give preference to their spiritual mood over prophetic instruction for the latter is disposed to sobriety. One of such ecstatic utterances holds that the sainthood is superior to prophethood. The reason given is that while the sainthood has its attention fixed on God, prophethood applies its mind to human beings. Undoubtedly the engrossment in God is better than absorption in His creations and that is why certain people explain these utterances as referring to the superiority of the saintly aspect of the prophets over their prophetic integral.

"Such specious reasonings appear unwarranted to me. This is because prophethood does not keep itself absorbed exclusively in the thought of created beings. Anyone occupying the exalted position of prophethood has his innermost thoughts fixed on God while outwardly he applies himself to the human beings. If any one gives undivided attention to the human beings, he is more of a politician or an unenlightened man than a prophet."[1]

Comparison between Saints and Prophets

"It is meaningless to say that the end of prophethood is the beginning of sainthood; this assertion would be senseless even if those who hold this view interpret the end of prophethood and the beginning of sainthood as the realisation of *sharī'ah*. They argue in this manner, against a fact self-evident, because they are not aware of the reality. These truths have not been explained by anyone. There are even persons who controvert this fact as if it were something incomprehensible, but every man who is just and cognizant of the exalted position of prophets and grandeur of the *sharī'ah*, can himself verify this subtle

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 95, addressed to Saiyid Ahmad of Bijwāda.

and salient truth and thereby increase his faith in it."[1]

Prophetic Appeal meant for Heart

"Hark ye ! my son, the prophets (on whom be peace and blessings) direct their call to the *'ālam-i-khalq* (world of creation). It is related on the authority of Prophet's Traditions that Islam is based on five things (i. e., acceptance of the Unity of God, prayer, fasting, poor-due and *haj*). Inasmuch as the heart of man is inclined towards the *'ālam-i-khalq*, it is invited to give faith to these fundamentals. All that is beyond the ken of the heart has neither been discussed nor reckoned as a part of the fundamentals of faith nor one is required to place his trust in them. Mark that the blessings of paradise, torments of hell, vision of the Divine Being and its denial pertain to the *'ālam-i-khalq*. These have nothing to do with the *'ālam-i-amr* (world of commands.)"[2]

Emulation of the Prophets rewarded by Proximity to God

"Similarly, the performance of obligatory, necessary and recommendatory acts are related to corporeal body belonging to the *'ālam-i-khalq* (world of creation). Acts of superoragation on the other hand, belong to the (*ālam-i-amr*) world of command. The divine proximity attained by the performance of all these acts depends on the nature of these actions. This means that the reward of obligatory acts is connected with the 'world of creation' and that of superoragatory acts concerns the 'world of commands'. There is hardly any doubt that the superoragatory acts are not comparable to the dutious obligations. The former are like a drop in the ocean as compared to dutious obligations, for these are the acts that are known as recommenda-

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 260, addressed to Shaikh Muhammad Sādiq.
2. *Ibid.*

tory by virtue of their being taken after the Prophet's example. Similarly anything recommended by a prophet is like a drop when compared to an act made obligatory through a divine command which is something resembling a water course. This analogy demonstrates the worth and merit of different types of actions as well as the superiority of the 'world of creation' over the 'world of command'."[1]

Excellence of Prophethood surpasses Sainthood

"God has made clear to this poorling that the virtues of sainthood as compared to the merits of prophethood are unworthy of any regard. They are not even a drop in the ocean if placed beside the prophetic virtues. Thus the grace and goodliness achieved through the way of the prophets is many times more than that can be had through sainthood and this shows the absolute superiority of the prophets of God. Even the angels of God occupy a place somewhat higher than the saints according to the consensus of a majority of scholars.

"All this goes to show that no saint can attain the merits of a prophet, or, to put it in another way, the head of the most virtuous saint would be beneath the feet of a prophet."[2]

Scholars are on the Right Path

"If you make a close study of the matters about which there is a dispute between the scholars and the mystics, you would find the former holding the ring of truth. The reason is that the scholars who follow the prophets are able to discern the merits and wisdom of prophethood while the mystics with their gaze fixed on the virtues of

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 260, addressed to Shaikh Muhammad Sādiq.
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 266, addressed to Khwājā 'Ubaid Ullah and Khwājā 'Abdullah

saints cannot go beyond the limited sphere of esoteric spiritual knowledge. Consequently, the knowledge gained through prophetic light is more accurate and valid than that can be had through spiritual perfection."[1]

"This humble self has already explained in his writings and letters that the merits of prophethood are similar to an ocean in comparison to a drop of spiritual perfection possessed by the saints. Yet, there are persons who cannot comprehend the reality of prophethood and hold that the sainthood is superior to prophethood. Others have interpreted this maxim to mean that the saintly aspect of the prophets excels their prophetic integral. Both these groups have been misled because of their ignorance of the reality of prophethood. Similar is the case with those who prefer *sukr* (intoxication) to *sahw* (sobriety). Had they known the reality of *sahw* they would have never drawn a parallel between it and the *sukr*.

Not a bit alike is the earth to the mansions of sky.

"They have perhaps likened the *sahw* of the elite to the alertness and wakefulness of the commonality and thus given preference to *sukr* over it. They ought to have brought the *sukr* of the righteous in comparison with the drunkenness of the laity in arriving at this decision. For all the men of wisdom are unanimous in holding the view that sobriety is better than intoxication, there should be no difference in the matter whether *sukr* or *sahw* is used in an allegorical or a literal sense."[2]

Dignity of the Prophets

"It should be clearly understood that the apostles of God owe their dignity and solemnity to their prophethood and not to their saintliness. Sainthood is not a bit more

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 268, addressed to Khān-i-Khānān
2. *Ibid.*

than a servant in attendance to a prophet. Had sainthood occupied a position superior to prophethood, the cherubim whose saintliness is assuredly more perfect than any saint would have taken precedence over the prophets. One of the misguided sects which held sainthood as superior to prophethood, was led to acknowledge the supremacy of the angels and consequently became a sect splintered from the *Ahl-i-Sunnat wal-Jam'at*. This was, thus, the result of their ignorance of the reality of prophethood. I have dwelt here on this subject at some length because the distance of time separating the people from the era of last prophethood has made prophecy look like something subsidiary to sainthood in the eyes of certain persons. *Our Lord! Forgive us for our sins and wasted efforts, make our foothold sure, and give us victory over [the disbelieving folk.*[1]"

Faith in the Unseen

"Mīr Muhib Ullah should know that the faith in the Ultimate Cause and His Attributes appertains to the prophets and their companions. Those saintly men of God who give a call (to have faith in the Ultimate Reality) are like the companions of the prophets, although they are very few in number. The faith in the realities beyond the ken of human perception is also granted to the scholars and the believers, in general, while *imān-i-shuhūdī* (discernible faith) belongs generally to the mystics whether they are ascetics or not. Although the consociate mystics descend (from the pinnacle of spiritual heights), their descent is never complete since their inner self continues to be watchful of another glimpse of the Ultimate Reality. Outwardly they are with their comrades but inwardly they maintain

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 268 to Khān-i-Khānān (Q. III : 147)

proximity to Divine Being and thus they are granted the *imān-i-shuhūdī*. The prophets of God who experience a complete descent concentrate entirely upon the mission of giving a call to the people, both inwardly and outwardly. The faith in the Hidden Reality thus really belongs to them (since they can fully maintain the faith in the Ultimate Reality even after their descent.)"[1]

Perfect Experience of the Ultimate Reality

"I have made out the point in some of my letters that being watchful of the higher regions after experiencing the descent signifies an imperfect ascent to the Ultimate Reality. This is a sign of deficient spiritual experience. The perfect descent, on the other hand, indicates perfection of ascent to the *Nihāyat-un-nihāyah* (Ultimate of the ultimate). The dual attention (to the Creator and the created) has been recognised by the *sufis* as the acme of spiritual perfection and the combination of *tashbīh* (integration) and *tanzīh* (abstraction) as the consummation of spiritual proficiency."[2]

Islamic Concept of Sufism

The method employed for attaining proximity to God and avoiding worldliness through perfection of morals, which later on came to be known as *tasawwuf* or mysticism, was identical with the *tazkiyah* (purification) and *ihsān* (sincere worship) in the Quranic and *hadīth* terminology. It was, in fact, one of the four objectives of the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) as explained in this verse of the Qur'ān :

"He it is who hath sent among the unlettered ones a messenger of their own, to recite unto them revelations and to purify them, and to teach them the Scripture and wisdom, though heretofore they were indeed in error manifest"[3]

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 272 to Muhib Ullah of Mānikpūr.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Q. LXII: 2

The task of maintaining a judicious balance between the rituals and the spirit of religion, safeguarding the revelatory fountain to which the faithful returned again and again to refresh his spiritual vision was performed by the successors of the holy Prophet and the right-guided *'ulamā*. They took care to protect and develop not only the external frame of theological discipline of the Muslim society but also helped in promoting the spiritual health of its members which linked them with the intuitive consciousness of the Prophet. In the beginning the emphasis was more on the inner nature and vital principles of faith rather than on its amplification or finding new channels for its practical experience. However, with the expansion of Muslim rule over vast areas, accretion of great numbers of adherents of widely diverse spiritual and intellectual capacities and influx of wealth and riches and the means of comfort, new and embarrassing issues began to crop up which threatened to transform the religious thinking of the Muslim community. With the increasing distance of time from the days of the Holy Prophet the new ideas started posing problems in the shape of spiritual and moral infirmities or novel concepts and philosophies, as if, in accordance with the Quranic dictum: *And the term was prolonged for them, and so their hearts were hardened.* It was, then, with the increasing range of intellectual activity that the *tazkiyah* and *ihsān* were institutionalised under the name of *tasawwuf* (mysticism) into a spiritual discipline. Another development of a similar nature could be seen in the fields of Arabic grammer and rhetorics formerly grounded in the instinctive appreciation of the Arabic language by the indigenous people, which were stimulated by contact with the non-Arabs and then compiled into elaborate sciences complete with experts, schools of grammarians and their distinctive syllabuses, each of which attracted a large number of students desirous of learning all about these rules.

During the initial period of Islamic era the *tazkiyah* or *ihsān* or the method of spiritual purification with a deep and real

spiritual experience was based upon the concrete injunctions of the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* and on following the Holy Prophet's example. But, as the contact with the non-Arabs increased through their acceptance of Islam in large numbers, mysticism and gnosticism of the new converts to Islam stimulated mystical-ascetical attitudes in devotional exercises. Undue deference came to be paid to those admired as godly persons and a number of unauthorised rites and customs began to be introduced in those circles until some of the mystics accepted what could be called blatantly un-Islamic thoughts.

Trust in the philosophies professing to attain to the knowledge of God through spiritual ecstasy, direct intuition and excessive supplications gave birth to the view that earnest and assiduous devotions along with strict observance of all the obligatory and commendatory services enjoined by the *sharī'ah* and the *sunnah* helped in attaining a stage of knowledge which made a traveller of the path of spirit independent of the obligations of the *sharī'ah* meant for the common man. It was the stage known as *suqūt-i-taklīf* or cession of religious obligations. Those who entertained this belief adduced in their support the Quranic verse: "*And serve thy Lord till there cometh unto thee the conviction.*"[1] Yet, it was a mischievous doctrine destructive of the *sharī'ah* and the religious values of Islam, for it encouraged an attracted devotee to brush aside the divine services and mandatory obligations.

It seems that these innovations and aberrations had started emerging perceptibly from the beginning of the fourth century when the Abbaside power was at its zenith and the urban centres in the Muslim world were thriving as fleshpots of luxury and culture. The first book on *taswwuf* was *Kitāb-ul-Lum'a* written by Shaikh Abū Nasr Sarrāj (d. 378/988). A portion of this work is devoted to the methods of following

1. 'Certainty' according to a majority of commentators, means death in this verse.

the lead of the last Prophet (on whom be peace.)[1] Thereafter Saiyid 'Ali Hujwīrī (d.465/1072) warned in the *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb*[2] that 'attainment of reality was impossible without following the law.....mystic reality without law was hypocrisy'. Imām 'Abul Qāsim Qushayrī (d. 465/1072), a contemporary of Hujwīrī, wrote *Risālah Qushayriyah* which became the principal manual of mysticism. In it he laments the antinomian tendencies of the *sūfīs* of his time in these words:

> "Sanctity of the *sharī'ah* has fled from their hearts; indifference to religion has been taken by them as a course safe and dependable; they attach no importance to performance of devotions; and make little of prayers and fastings."[3]

The *Risālah Qushayriyah* opens with the emphasis on faithful adherence to the *sharī'ah* and then Qushayrī proceeds to illustrate his views by a series of brief biographies of the prominent *sūfīs* and saints of old who had faithfully complied with the dictates of the *sharī'ah* and followed the practice of the Prophet. In the last chapter of this book entitled 'Testament for the Disciples' Qushayrī writes that 'this affair (mystical enlightenment) depends upon adherence to religious laws.'

Among the religious scholars and mystics of a conspicuous sincerity, holiness and intuition upholding the supremacy of the *sharī'ah* Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir al-Jīlānī occupies a distinguished place. His teaching was firmly based on the Qur'ān and Traditions; his life set an example of walking steadfastly on the straight path of the holy law as well as attaining a state of proximity to God. His *Ghuniyāt-ul-Tālibīn* consolidated

1. *Kitāb ul-Lum'a*, London, 1914, pp. 93-104
2. The *Kash-ul-Mahjūb* by Abul Hasan 'Alī b. 'Uthmān b. Abī 'Alī al-Jullābī popularly known as Dātā Ganj Bakhsh, was translated into English by Dr. R. N. Nicholson (London, 1936). His tomb still exists at Lahore.
3. *Risālah Qushayriyah* (Cairo, 1319 A.H.), p.1

the bond of mysticism with the religious law of Islam. His other work, *Futūh-ul-Ghāib* lays emphasis on betaking the example of the Holy Prophet and avoiding every innovation in religious practices. The second lecture in this work opens with the exhortation: 'Follow the example of the Prophet and never give way to any innovation.' He occupied the place of a renovator of faith inasmuch as he delivered up the keys of *tasawwuf* to the *shari'ah*. He commended that one should first observe what has been made obligatory by the *shari'ah* and then comply with the *sunnah* and voluntary observances: performance of an act of secondary importance in place of the primary one was, by the same token, denounced by him as self-conceit and foolishness.

The *Awārif-ūl-Ma'ārif* by Shaikh Shihāb-ud-dīn Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234) was the most authoritative and popular compendium on mysticism which has ever since been esteemed as the principal study in the seminaries of the *sufis*. The second part of this book expounds the secrets and wisdom of the *shari'ah* and reckons *tasawwuf* as the means of "taking after the Prophet's example in speech, actions and bearings; for, the firmness of a *sufi* on this path sanctifies his soul, lifts the curtain lying over reality and enables him to follow the Prophet in the minutest detail."[1]

In the ninth century of Islamic era when mystical and gnostic currents were spreading out into the Muslim world with a lightning speed, Shaikh Muhyi-ud-dīn Ibn 'Arabī and his disciples transformed *tasawwuf* into a philosophical discipline and took over a number of symbols and terminologies pertaining to Hellenistic philosophy and metaphysics. *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* (Unity of Being), accepted by them as the basic principle of sufism, came to be admired both in the *sufi* hospices and seats of learning. Indifference to the scripture and the *sunnah*

1. For a detailed description see *Tasawwuf-i-Islām* by 'Abdul Mājid Daryābādi.

coupled with unfamiliarity with the science of *hadīth* gave rise to a number of irreligious practices in the monasteries of the mystics which could neither be approved by fundamental theological thought of Islam nor was known to the earlier Muslims.

India had been a centre of *yoga* and asceticism for thousands of years. The Muslim mystics came into contact with the yogis who had developed their telepathic and occult powers through constant yogic exercises and holding of breath. Some of the mystics even learnt these arts from the yogis. The country was, by that time, unacquainted with the *Sihāh Sittah*[1] and other authentic books of *hadīth*. It was only in Gujarāt that the contact with the scholars of Arabia had kept people conscious of this branch of Islamic learning. 'Alī Muttaqī of Burhānpūr and Muhammad Tāhir of Patan had kept the torch of Traditions lighted in that part of the country and endeavoured to descredit innovations in religious thought and usages. But the orientation of life in all its aspects as dictated by the authentic sayings and practices of the Prophet, attempted by the scholars in Gujarāt, was unknown to other parts of the country, nor did the people know anything about the *Sihāh Sittah* or about the scholars who had devoted their lives to the study of *hadīth* and rebuttal of unsound norms and usages. The *Jawāhar-i-Khamsa* by a celebrated Shattārī mystic, Shaikh Muhammad Ghauth of Gwālior, offers the best example of the then *sufī* thought which was permeated with the indigenous theosophic doctrines and practices. The articulate structure of *sufī* precepts and cults propounded in this book are based entirely on the supposed utterances of the earlier mystics or the personal experiences of the author who, it seems, did not consider it necessary to deduce his precepts from any authoritative collection of *ahādīth* or any book dealing with the Prophet's life and character. Being a collectanea of orisans for special

1. The six most authentic compilations of *hadīth*.

occasions and specific purposes, it includes supplications for offering *namāz-i-ahzāb* (prayer of the confederates), *salāt-ul-'āshiqīn* (prayer of the lovers), *namāz tanvīr-ul-qabr* (prayer for grave's illumination) and a number of other devotions and supplications meant for different months of the year that cannot be traced to any saying or doing of the Prophet of Islam. The second part of the book gives a list of *asmā'-i-akbariyah* (the great names), coined by the Shaikh, which are really the names of the angels in Hebrew and Syriac with words normally prefixed to vocative names as if beseeching their help instead of God's. There is another hymn in the praise of certain beings, in the language of ancient Jews, with vocative prefixes and known as *du'ā-i-bashmakh*. These mysterious appellations, which constitute the essential core of propitiating the so-called divine attributes, have even agents which are supposed to be cognizant of the secrets and significances of their principals. Similarly, the alphabets have implicit meanings and agents. It includes even a litany entreating Caliph 'Alī, as the worker of miracles.

Thus, when the Mujaddid took up his reformatory task, it was a period of exaggerations and eccentricities displaying an admixture of the *sunnah* and *bid'ah* (innovation), theology and philosophy, Islamic mysticism and *yoga*—all intermingled indiscriminately. The Mujaddid has given a graphic description of the then obtaining situation in one of his letters to Khwājā Muhammad 'Abdullah. He writes:

> "Innovations that hit the eye these days are numerous enough to make one think that a river of darkness and gloom is surging on all sides, while the lamp of *sunnah* is quivering in this pitch-black darkness like the fireflies gleaming in a night shrouded with darkness."[1]

It was the time when Islam was imperilled in India: the Muslim kingdom was trying to strike at its roots, the cloisters of mystics were paying scant regard to the sayings and doings

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. II, No. 23 to Khwāja Muhammad 'Abdullah

of the holy Prophet, the *shari'ah* (the law) and the *tariqah* (the mystic path) were presented as two distinct disciplines having different codes and prescriptions, and if anybody ever summoned up the courage to know the theological sanction for any mystical formulation the answer given to him was:

Drench thy prayer mat with wine if the revered bartender so directs,
For the traveller is not ignorant of the runs and rounds of the track.

This was the time when Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī thundered forth:

"*Tariqah* (the path) is subservient to and follower of the *shari'ah* (the law); to be perfect in the Law is much more desirable than to attain the spiritual raptures and ecstasies and perceptions through the eyes of heart. Observance of even one commandment of the holy Law is more edifying than a thousand years of spiritual exercises: taking of a brief nap following the practice of the Prophet is more salutary than the night-long vigil. The practices of the mystics provide no authority to decide what is permissible or impermissible for these things require the testimony of the Scripture and the *sunnah* and the books of jurisprudence. Strivings of the soul by those who are misguided take them away from God instead of bringing them nearer to Him. Visions and auditions of the mysterious world are just a means of amusement and recreation and they do not absolve anyone from following the commandments of the *shari'ah*".

Shaikh Ahmad expounds the matters discussed here in these letters:

"*Shari'ah* is the guarantor of all the felicities of this world and the next. There is not even one objective for the fulfilment of which one may require anything else besides the *shari'ah*. The *tariqah* (the path) and the *haqiqah* (reality), which form the distinctive marks of the mystics are subservient to *shari'ah* i.e., nothing more than the

means for obtaining the state of *ikhlās* (sincerity). Thus, the only purpose served by the *tarīqah* and the *haqīqah* is to actualise the inner spirit of the *sharī'ah* and not to achieve any objective lying beyond its reach. The mystical states and stations, ecstatic transports, intuitive knowledge and spiritual insights gained by the mystics during the course of their spiritual journey are not the ends; they are simply images and ideas meant for cheering up and inspiring hope in the novices of the spiritual path so that they may move onward and reach the stage of *ridā* (resignation) which is the goal of *sulūk* and *jadhbah* (i. e., the compliance of the *sharī'ah*)".[1]

In the same letter he further writes:

"Those who are undiscerning take the states and stations as the goals of spiritual journey and its observations and manifestations as significations of reality with the result that they become prisoners of their own imaginations and mental creations, and remain unblessed by the quintessence of the *sharī'ah*.

"*Dreadful for the idolators is that unto which thou callest them. Allah chooseth for Himself whom He will, and guideth unto Himself him who turneth (towards Him).*[2]"

In another letter he explains the ascendancy and precedence of obligatory observances over those voluntary in these words:

"The actions from which proximity to God ensues are either obligatory or voluntary, but the voluntary observances never make the grade of obligatory ones. Fulfilment of an obligatory observance at its due time and in all sincerity is preferable to performance of voluntary ones for a thousand years."[3]

That cleansing of the self and healing of the souls can

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 36, to Hāji Mullā Muhammad of Lahore
2. *Ibid.*, (Q. XLII : 13)
3. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 29 to Shaikh Nizām of Thānesar

easily be brought about through compliance with the commandments of *sharī'ah* than by means of penance and purgation is forcefully advocated by the Mujaddid in one of his letters in which he writes:

> "Discharging a commandment of the *sharī'ah* is more efficacious for cleansing the self of its baser instincts than the strivings and exertions of a thousand years undertaken on one's own initiative. These troubles and pains not undertaken to meet the requirement of the *sharī'ah* can rather whet the appetite of the self and increase its indulgence. The Brahmins and the yogis have not left a stone unturned in taxing their energies in travails but these have not proved of any benefit to them except in making them even more self-indulgent and immoderate."

In one of his letters Mujaddid explains the significance of the *sharī'ah's* accomplishments in these words:

> "A majority of people live in fool's paradise, well-contended with the illusory almonds and walnuts. What do they know of the perfection of *sharī'ah* and the reality of *tarīqah* and *haqīqah*? They consider the *sharī'ah* as the shell and the *haqīqah* as the kernel, but they are not aware of their inner realities. They have been duped by the superficial talk of the mystics and bewitched by the stages and stations of the spiritual journey."[1]

The merits of living up to the precepts and practices of the Holy Prophet have been thus delineated by the Mujaddid in another letter.

> "Excellence lies in conforming to the *sunnah* of the Prophet and the honour in abiding by the dictates of the *sharī'ah* as, for example, taking a nap during day-time with the intention of living up to the Prophet's *sunnah* is better than keeping vigils during innumerable nights. Similarly, giving away a farthing in satisfaction of *zakāt* (poor due)

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 40 to Shaikh Muhammad Chitrī

is more meritorious than expending a hillock of gold of one's own accord."[1]

In yet another letter he writes:

"Immature mystics trifle with the obligatory and commendatory devotions and give greater attention to the *fikr* (contemplation) and *dhikr* (remembrance). In a like manner they take to ascetic excercises but neglect the congregational and Friday prayers. They do not know that the performance of even one prayer with the congregation is more rewarding than a thousand rounds of sacraments. The *fikr* and *dhikr* with due deference to the *shari'ah* are undoubtedly essential and meritorious. There are also misguided scholars who are hard at work in popularising the voluntary observances even at the cost of neglecting those that are obligatory."[2]

In one of his letters addressed to Mīr Muhammad N'omān, Shaikh Ahmad criticises the misguided mystics in these words:

"There is a group among them which has not cared to acquaint itself with the reality of prayers and their characteristic excellences. They want to remedy their ills through alternative recipes which, in their opinion, can fulfil their heart's desire. There are some among them who even assume that the prayer, founded on the relationship between the divine and the devotee, is of litte use to them. They consider fasting as more propitious than the prayer since the former is held by them as expressive of the divine attributes of eternity. And, then, there is a multitude which seeks to assuage its troubled soul through melody and tune and considers whirling and dancing as the consummation of spiritual experience. Have these people not heard that God has not endowed the things impermissible with the properties necessary to work a cure. Had they

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 114 to Sufi Qurbān
2. *Ibid*, Vol. I, No. 260 to Shaikh Muhammad Sādiq

known even a bit of the accomplishments of prayers, they would have not gone after musical recitations or ecstatic sessions."[1]

Shaikh Ahmad discusses, in one of his letters, the purification of inner self sought by the non-Muslim ecstatics who develop certain occult powers despite their indulgence in wickedness and immorality. He writes:

"Real purification depends on adherence to righteousness as approved by God, and this rests upon the teachings of the prophets as already explained by me. Thus purification of the self and heart cannot really be attained without the help of prophethood. The purification attained by the infidels and the wrongdoing people is the expurgation of self and not of heart. The cleansing of self alone, however, does not increase anything but waywardness. The mysterious and magical powers sometimes developed by the infidels and wrongdoing people through the expurgation of self are surely *istidrāj* (illusory miraculous power) which leads them by degrees to hell and destruction."[2]

The Mujaddid held that the antinomian tendency of brushing aside the authority of established religious institutions and observances was extremely dangerous. Dismissing these thoughts as misguided and unsound he writes in a letter addressed to Miān Shaikh Bad'ī-ud-dīn.

"Immature mystics and inconsistent disbelievers desiring to get rid of the *shari'ah's* obligations maintain that its observance is meant for the commonality. They hold the view that the elite is required to attain gnosis just as the kings and rulers are duty-bound to administer justice to others. Their argument is that since the end of *shari'ah* is attainment of gnosis, when one attains the knowledge of reality the obligations of *shari'ah* automatically wither

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 261 to Mīr Muhammad N'omān
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 266 to Khwājā 'Abdullah and 'Ubaid Ullal

away. They bring this verse[1] of the Qur'ān in their support. *And serve thy Lord until there cometh unto thee the certainty.*"[2]

The actions of the mystics can never be taken as the standard, according to Shaikh Ahmad, for deciding the things made permissible or prohibited by the *shari'ah*. He makes out this point in another letter in which he says:

> "No practice of any mystics is authoritative enough to decide what is lawful or unlawful. Will it not be sufficient that instead of reproaching them we pass over their actions and leave them to the judgment of God? This is a matter in which the opinion of Imām Abū Hanīfa, Imām Abū Yūsuf or Imām Muhammad should be considered authoritative rather than the practice of Abūbakr Shiblī or Abul Hasan Nūrī. The half-baked mystics of our day have taken to dancing and whirling as an accepted religious rite and raised it to the level of divine service. *These are the persons who have taken their religion for sport and pastime.*"[3]

Such is Mujaddid's approach to wholehearted affirmation of every commandment of the *shari'ah* that whenever he is told about any practice or doctrine of the mystics which is incompatible with the proper Islamic beliefs or which seeks to prove any unsound dogma on the authority of any seer or saint rather than placing reliance upon the Book of God or example of the Prophet, it becomes difficult for him to hold his pen from denouncing and assailing the non-conformist view. Once, when an unsound utterance of a mystic Shaikh ('Abdul Karım Yamānī) was related to him by one of his disciples, Shaikh Ahmad could not tolerate the erroneous remark and expressed his disapproval to it in a very forceful

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 276 to Miān Shaikh Bad'i-ud-din (Q. XV : 99)
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, No. 266 to Khwājā 'Abdullah and Khwājā 'Ubaid Ullah (Q. VII : 51)

and poignant style.

"My Lord! this meek-spirited is not accustomed to endure such observations which stir his Fārūqī blood and do not allow him to think out any explanation by stretching their sense. Such things might have been acceptable to Shaikh Kabīr Yamānī or Shaikh Akbar Shāmī, but what we require is the testimony of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and not those of Muhīy-ud-dīn Ibn 'Arabī, Sadr-ud-dīn Qūnawī or Shaikh 'Abdur Razzāq Kāshī. We require *nass*[1] and not the *fus*:[2] the conquest of Medina has made us independent of the conquest[3] of Mecca."[4]

Vigorous defence of the sacred law of Islam leads Shaikh Ahmad to hold that every action in compliance with the *sharī'ah* can be classified as *dhikr* or remembrance of God. He writes to explain his viewpoint in one of his letters to Khwājā Muhammad Sharaf-ud-dīn Husain.

"One should continually engage oneself in the remembrance of God. Every action in accordance with the *sharī'ah* comprises *dhikr*, even though it be of the nature of sale and purchase. In every action and behaviour the dictates of the *sharī'ah* should be kept in view so that each one of these actions qualifies to be reckoned as a *dhikr*. The *dhikr* is basically meant for putting away mental inadvertence and thus when one is heedful of legal doctrines of the lawful and unlawful in every act, one automatically becomes absorbed in God's remembrance who is the Ultimate Lawgiver. This would by itself save one from remissness and bestow the wealth of perpetual

1. Lit. a demonstration, that is, a legal maxim derived from the Qur'ān or *hadīth*.
2. *i. e.*, *Fusūs il-Hikam* by Muhīy-ud-dīn Ibn 'Arabī
3. The allusion is to *Futūhāt-i-Makkiyah* by Muhīy-ud-dīn Ibn Arabī
4. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. II, No. 100 to Mullā Hasan of Kashmir

engrossment in God."[1]

It was on the basis of absolute superiority of the *shari'ah*, as preached by the Mujaddid, that he severely criticized *sijdah-i-t'āzimi* (prostration of honour) which had come into vogue in the circle of certain mystics. On being informed that some of his disciples were not cautious enough in this regard, the Mujaddid warned them against that practice.[2] Similarly, he refuted and condemned such polytheistic customs and usages, taken lightly in those days, as rendering honour to paganish rites, seeking help of the beings other than God, participation in festivals and customs of the infidels, vows and oblations in the name of saints and keeping of fasts to propitiate the blessed saints or daughter of the Prophet. In a letter[3] written to a female disciple, the Mujaddid has mentioned a number of such unsound practices which had come into vogue among the Muslim masses in those days.

The restoration of sound and authoritative Islamic beliefs and practices and refutations of all innovations containing antinomian and polytheistic elements constituted a distinguishing feature of the great movement of revivalism and reform initiated by Shaikh Ahmad after a long time in India. These un-Islamic practices stimulated by contact with the non-Muslim majority in the country and gaining strength with the passage of time were then threatening to misdirect the religious life of the Indian Muslims by corrupting the whole level of Islamic religious thought and action in the country. The reformatory endeavour of the Mujaddid was brought to consummation by the later mystics of Mujaddidī-Naqshbandī school like Shāh Walī Ullah (1114-1176/1702-1762) and his sons[4] and finally by Saiyid Ahmad

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. II, No. 25 to Khwājā Muhammad Sharaf-ud-dīn Husain
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. II, No. 92 to Mīr Muhammad N'omān and Vol. I, No. 29 to Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn of Thānesar.
3. *Makūtbāt*, Vol. III, No. 41 to Sāliha
4. Among whom the efforts of Shāh Muhammad Ismā'il Shahīd

(Continued on next page)

Shahīd and his disciples who built up one of the strongest movements in history for the propagation of Islamic teachings through popularising the translations of the Qur'ān and *hadīth* in local languages as well as exemplified Islamic behaviour through their personal conduct.

Rejection of Bid'at Hasanah

Bid'ah, in Islamic terminology, signifies acceptance of any dogma or ritual not laid down by God or His Messenger, as an approved article of religion, or treating it as something sacrosanct and helpful in achieving proximity to God, or even conducting oneself in a manner one ought to treat an accepted rule of Islamic law. *Bid'ah* is thus the man-made law built-in within the system of law given by God. A closer look at *bid'ah* reveals that it has a set of laws complete with all the ramifications like obligatory and commendable observances which run parallel to those prescribed by the *shari'ah*, and they sometimes even increase in number, importance or sanctity than the rules of God-given law. *Bid'ah*, by its very nature, refuses to accept that the *shari'ah* is complete and inviolable or that nothing by way of religious duties due to God can now be added to its corpus. It is blind to the fact that whatever new additions are made to the articles of religion would necessarily be unsound and unauthoritative. The implications of *bid'ah* have been eloquently described by Imām Mālik who says:

> "Whoever initiates a *bid'ah* in Islam and also considers it as something commendable, virtually declares that (God forbid) Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon

(Continued from previous page)

(d. 1246/1831), the grandson of Shāh Walī Ullah, deserves to be mentioned. See *Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, brought out by the Academy, for the heroic struggle launched for the revival of faith in the nineteenth century.

him) did not complete his mission honestly. For Allah has said: *This day have I perfected your religion for you.* Thus nothing that was not accepted as an article of faith during the lifetime of the Prophet can now be recognised as authoritative."[1]

The chief characteristic of the *shari'ah* revealed by God is that it is easy and practicable for all human beings in every age. It is because the Law-giver is also the Creator of man and He is aware of the nature, strength and weakness of His creatures: *Should He not know what He created? And He is the Subtle, the Aware.*[2]

The divine law, therefore, makes allowance for the needs and propensities of human beings but when man promotes himself to the position of the Law-giver he is not able to reckon with all these intricate matters. This is the reason why the addition of frequent *bid'ahs*, from time to time, makes religion so involved, difficult and bewildering that the people are forced to bid farewell to the religion itself. And, then, the promise made in the Qur'ān that *God hath not laid upon you in religion any hardship*[3] is automatically withdrawn. The long list of customs and rites and religious observances added to the apostalic faith by these innovations, wherever they have found a free hand, bespeak of the truth of this contention.

Another notable feature of the faith and religious law is the uniformity in its structure and content. The creed and *shari'ah* remain unchanged in every age and country: a Muslim migrating to any other part of the world would have no difficulty in following the rules of religion; he would require neither a local guide nor a directory. But the *bid'ah* running counter to this religious principle does not exhibit any uniformity. It displays local characteristics which may be the product of a certain

1. Related from Imām Mālik by Ibnul Majishoon
2. Q. LXVII: 14
3. Q. XX: 78

regional or historical development or may issue from personal likes and dislikes of a certain individual. The *bid'ah* thus differs from place to place and changes its shape so easily that it can assume a different form and complexion for every city, locality or a house.

It was because of this knowledge of things, human and divine, and the causes by which all human affairs are controlled that the Prophet of Islam had strongly urged his followers to follow his *sunnah* and keep themselves aloof from every form of *bid'ah*. He is reported to have said that:

> "Whoever gives rise to anything not a part of my religion then it shall be rejected."
>
> "Keep away from *bid'ah*, for every *bid'ah* leads to waywardness which will end up in the hell."

The holy Prophet had also made the following farsighted prediction for the guidance of his followers:

> "Whenever some people introduce an innovation in the religion, an equal amount of *sunnah* is taken away."

The companions of the Prophet of Islam rejected every innovation in religion. Thereafter the jurists, scholars and reformers took a stand against the impious creeds and practices cropping up in their own times and relentlessly fought to nip every mischief in the bud. However, the overcredulous masses as well as the worldly minded leaders and hypocritical ministers of religion have always exhibited an irresistable attraction to those pious frauds which proves the truth of the Quranic description of these blasphemers.

> "O ye who believe! Lo! many of the rabbis and monks devour the wealth of mankind wantonly and debar (men) from the way of Allah."[1]

The scholars and reformers had sometimes to face severe trials for opposing such innovations but they remained firm

1. Q. IX: 34

in what was considered by them as an struggle for safeguarding the faith and the *shari'ah* from corruption. They were branded as static, conservative and enemies of religion but they continued their fight against heterodoxy until the unscriptural beliefs and practices were completely effaced with the result that today we know of the existence of several of these innovations only from the pages of history. The leftovers of such deviations are still being combated by the true scholars of Islam who have been thus praised by God.

> "Of the believers are men who are true to that which they covenanted with Allah. Some of them have paid their vow by death (in battle), and some of them still are waiting; and they have not altered in the least."[1]

One of the greatest fallacies that had very often led the people astray was what the people knew as *bid'at-i-hasanah* or the nice innovation. The misguided people had divided the innovations into nice and vile, and held that every innovation was not necessarily worthless. In their opinion a number of innovations fell in the category of nice innovations and were exempt from the prophetic dictum that 'every innovation is a waywardness.'[2]

The Mujaddid raised the banner of revolt against such specious arguments of the misguided *sūfīs* and denied them so strenuously and emphatically with confidence and cogent arguments as had not been done by anybody among his immediate predecessors or contemporaries. The extracts given

1. Q. XXXIII : 23
2. Certain people argued on the basis of Caliph Umar's remark who, on witnessing the people offering the prayer of *tarāwīh* in congregation, said, "This is a good innovation". Obviously, he had used the word *bid'ah* only in a literal sense because the offering of *tarāwīh* prayers since the life-time of the Prophet was an established fact, proved by authentic Traditions. For a fuller discussion of the subject see *Al-A'itasām bil-sunnah* by Imām Shātibī and *Aidhā' ul-Haq as-Sarīh fi-Ihk'ām il Mayyit waz-Dharīh* by Mohammad Ismā'il Shahīd.

here from a few of his letters bear witness to his clear thinking, self-assurance and deep knowledge of the subject.

Inviting Shaikh Muhammad 'Abdullah, the son of this spiritual mentor, to join hands with him in rejecting the innovations and reviving the *sunnah* of the holy Prophet, Mujaddid writes in a letter:

> "Now that one thousand years have run out since the prophethood of the last Messenger of God and the signs of the Doomsday have began to unfold themselves, and this is an age in which the *sunnah* is shrouded and falsehood has taken root, the *bid'ah* is becoming popular as the order of the day. A man of mettle is required today who should overthrow *bid'ah* and bring it to its knees and re-establish the example of the Prophet through his spirited defence of the *sunnah*. Popularity of the *bid'ah* which corrupts the religion, and veneration of an innovator really means destruction of the citadel of Islam. The holy Prophet is reported to have said that:
>
> "Anybody who holds an innovator in reverence assists in pulling down the edifice of Islam."
>
> "The need of the hour is to take courage and familiarize the people with even one practice of the Prophet and make them leave any one of the *bid'ah*. The effort in this directions has an abiding importance but now that it is sapping the strength of Islam, it has become all the more necessary to enforce the teachings of Islam, promote the *sunnah* and discourage the *bid'ah*."

Mujaddid goes on, in the same letter, to explain that the *bid'ah* has no virtue at all as contended by certain persons by coining the phrase of *bid'at-i-hasanah*.

> "The people of old saw some merit in certain innovations and declared some of its categories as unexceptionable. This humblehearted, however, does not agree with them and does not consider any innovation to be acceptable. He finds nothing save darkness and wickedness in them.

The Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) has clearly stated that 'every innovation is a waywardness'."[1]

In another letter written in Arabic, he writes to Mīr Muhib Ullah:

"It is difficult to understand how these people have found any merit in the things that have been invented after the completion of religion as approved and confirmed by God? Are they not aware of this basic fact that anything ingrafted after the completion and acceptance of a religion by God cannot have any merit whatsoever? *After the Truth what is there save the error?*[2]

"Had they known that attribution of any merit to a thing inserted in a perfect religion implied imperfection of that religion and amounted to an announcement that God had not yet completed His favour, they would have dared not deny what had been asserted by God."[3]

In another letter he argues the same point even more forcefully:

"Since every innovation in a religion is a *bid'ah* and every *bid'ah* is an error, what does it mean to attribute any merit to an innovation? As we know from the *ahādith* that every *bid'ah* impairs a *sunnah*, it is quite apparent that every *bid'ah* is vile a innovation. It has been related from the Prophet that:

"When any nation invents an innovation, a proportionate part of the *sunnah* is taken away from it. Thus attachment with a *sunnah* is infinitely better than trying to invent a new practice."

"Hassān has related on the authority of the Prophet that:

"Whenever a people will set up an innovation in the religion, God will take away a proporionate amount

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. II, No. 23
2. Q. X: 33
3. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. II, No. 19

of the *sunnah* prevalent among them and will not restore it till the Day of Judgement."

"One should know that the innovations taken as meritorious by certain scholars and mystics are always found, on deeper thought, to be conflicting with the *sunnah*."[1]

He goes on to reject the existence of nice innovations in the same letter in these words:

"There are some who hold that the innovations are of two kinds, the nice and vile innovations. They call those innovations as nice which were developed after the Prophet and right-guided Caliphs but which did not contradict any *sunnah* of the Prophet. An innovation is defined as vile by them if it runs counter to a *sunnah*. This meek-minded cannot see any worth or merit in any innovation and finds all of them vile and wicked. Even if we suppose that certain actions appear as virtuous and good to certain persons owing to a deficiency in their discernment, they would have nothing but sorrow and remorse when they are granted necessary comprehension and discretion.

"The last Prophet of God (on whom be peace and blessing) has explicitly stated that whoever introduces something which was not originally a part of our religion, it shall be rejected."[2]

One of the innovations that had gained popularity in those days was the *mīlād* or the gatherings to celebrate the birth of the holy Prophet. That this celebration was held in commemoration of the lovesome personage held dear by all as the apple of one's eye, any opposition to it was a delicate task involving misunderstanding and anger in the masses, and was likely to be taken as a sign of ungratefulness and lack of tender feelings for the holy Prophet. Mujaddid was, however, endowed with a soundness of judgement which had convinced him that anything

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 186 to Khwājā 'Abdur Rahmān Muftī of Kābul.
2. *Ibid.*

not prevalent during the time of the Prophet could not be beneficial for the Muslims nor contribute to their spiritual development: such an innovation would rather give birth to tendencies harmful to the Muslims. Therefore, when he was asked whether there was any objection to such gatherings if they were not attended by any ritual against the approved religious practices he answered:

> "This poorling is of the opinion that unless this practice is completely given up, the interested persons would not cease taking advantage of it. If the practice is declared as lawful, it would gradually lead to finding justification for other innovations also. Even a small mistake becomes a prelude to grave errors."[1]

The courageous step taken by the Mujaddid put the lid on a dangerous innovation which was gaining popularity among the masses owing to the patronage of undiscerning scholars and mystics and the interest taken in its furtherance by credulous nobles and the rich among the Muslims.

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 72 to Khwājā Hosām-ud-dīn

CHAPTER VII

UNITY OF BEING VERSUS UNITY OF MANIFESTATION

Shaikh Akbar Muhyi-ud-dīn Ibn Arabī

Among the earlier mystics who, in a state of perpetual rapture, are reported to have made remarks suggesting *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* or the Unity of Being, the two well known illuminists were Shaikh Bā Yazīd Bustāmī and Husain b. Mansūr Hallāj. The former, regarded as a common precursor of many a subsequent mystical order is credited with the sententious expressions like, "Glory be to me, how exalted am I" and "Naught but God dwells within my raiment", while the famous dictum of Mansūr Hallāj was, "I am the Truth."[1] All these aphorisms became familiar tunes with the later mystics.

Shaikh Muhyi-ud-dīn Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240), commonly known as the Shaikh Akbar (the Great Master) was, however, the originator of this unitive doctrine in a cognitive sense for

1. 'The Truth' signified here the person of God.

it was through his writings that the proposition reached its culminating point. The blaze of his glory rose in his life-time so brightly that his thought was diffused into almost every mystical order and came to be regarded as the touchstone of spiritual perfection. Denial of Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine was thereafter taken for ignorance of mystic thought and experience. Giving a graphic description of Ibn 'Arabi's hypothetical propositions Mujaddid writes in a letter that he systematised his doctrine with major and minor premises in the same way as rules of grammar and syntax are formulated.[1] It is not our intention to enter into any detailed description of the principle of *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* or its development which flowered into a definite school of thought and produced prolific literature enough to suffice a library. It would even be difficult to attempt a brief survey of this doctrine which will lead us to the examination of an abstruse thought of philosophy and mysticism. Furthermore, as the comprehension of the doctrine requires acquaintance with the terminology of philosophy and mysticism as well as a personal experience of the journey of spirit, the readers who are interested in a deeper study of the subject may go through the two famous works of Shaikh Akbar, *Futūhāt Makkiyah* (the Meccan Revelations) and *Fusūs il-Hikam* (Bezels of Wisdom).[2]

We shall present here a few extracts from the *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* of Maulānā Abdul 'Alī of Lucknow commonly known as Bahr-ul-Uloom (d. 1225 A.H.) for he is regarded as an authority and most authentic interpreter of the Shaikh Akbar's doctrines expounded in the *Futūhāt Makkiyah* and *Fusūs il-Hikam*. The writings of Maulānā 'Abdul 'Alī include a number of technicalisms of mystical vocabulary which can be fully understood

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, letter No. 89, to Qazi Ismāil Faridābādī.
2. It would also be worthwhile to go through the *Asl al-Usūl fi Bayān Mutābqata al-Kashf b'il M'aqūl wal Manqūl* by Saiyid Shah Abdul Qādir Mehrabān Fakhri (d. 1204), Madras University Press, 1959

by those who are acquainted with *sufi* thought and phraseology, yet his explanation is by far the most concise and easiest than other writings on the subject.

"All the things that exist besides Allah in the world are either states or determinations. All these states and determinations are His manifestations, that is, His inflows, and this means that He reveals Himself through them. This inflowing is not of the nature as asserted by those who believe in the indwelling of or Union of God with the Universe. This influxion is rather like the integral of numerical 'one' since all the numericals denote nothing save a unit of numeration. The world has only one *'ain* or essence, that is, it is the manifestation of only One Being in everything. The world came into existence from the Being of God and His Being manifests itself in the multiplicity of the former. Allah is the First and the Last, and the Manifest, and the Hidden. Allah has not made anyone His partner.

"The blessed names of Allah, whether they are transcendental or immanent, do not manifest themselves without any substance. Now, that these names are dependent on substances for their manifestation and their perfection cannot be conceived in their absence, God brought into existence the *'āyān* or essences of the world so that these essences may serve as the seats of His manifestation and reveal the perfection of His *(asmā')* names.

"Allah is absolutely self-sufficing in so far as the perfection of His Being is concerned but the perfection of His names (*asmā'*) is not independent of the outward existence of the world. Hāfiz of Shīrāz has said:

No mattar if the beloved spreads shadow over the lover;
I clamoured for him and he longed for me.

"This is also testified by an accepted *hadīth* which quotes God as saying: "I was a hidden treasure. I wished that I

should be known so I brought the creation into being. Wherefore I manifested Myself and My names through My creations."

"One who belives in the duality of existence; one of God and the other of casualness *(mumkin)*[1] is guilty of ascribing associates to God although his guilt is not apparant. On the other hand, one who is convinced of the Unity of Existance, asserts that Allah alone exists, everything else is His manifestation and thus the multiplicity of manifestation does not conflict with the Divine Unity. Then he is a true Unitarian.

"You are not the essence of Reality because the existence of God is absolute while yours is limited and locational and nothing that is locational can be deemed to be absolute. But in your inner nature you are the essence of Reality because the Absolute Reality resides in you. Only thus you can witness God free from limitations inherent in the essence of created beings: thus it is located in the locational beings. In other words, you find God, the Absolute, manifested in a located being. Nothing exists save God nor is there any deity beside Him."[2]

Ibn Arabi's mists of legend thickened so rapidly after his death that he became the inspirer of almost ninety percent mystics, philosophers and poets. He was acclaimed as the greatest mystic of all times; yet the devotion accorded to him evoked criticism of such eminent scholars as Hāfiz Ibn Hajar 'Asqalānī, 'Allāma Sakhāwī, Abū Hayyān, Shaikh al-Islām 'Izz-ud-dīn, Hāfiz Abū Zura'a, Shaikh-al-Islām Sirāj-ud-dīn al-Balqīnī, Mullā 'Ali Qāri, 'Allāma S'ad-ud-dīn Tafiāzānī etc. All these scholars are known for their deep knowledge of religious sciences as well as compass of mind, yet they were

1. *Mumkin* is a being of which neither the existence nor non-existence is inconceivable.
2. Bahr-ul-Uloom Maulana 'Abdul 'Alī 'Ansāri, *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd*

dubbed as orthodox for none excepting a few of them laid any claim to be a pilgrim of the spiritual path endowed with intuitive knowledge of the hidden realities. Their opposition to Ibn 'Arabī was, therefore, brushed aside as the enmity of the uninitiated.

Ibn Taimiyah's Criticism o Wahdat-ul-Wujūd

The greatest critic of *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* was Shaikh-ul-Islām Taqī-ud-dīn Ibn Taimiyah (661-728/1263-1328) who analysed the doctrine and its influence on the common people enamoured by mysticism in the light of the Qur'ān and the *hadīth*. He was born twenty-three years after the death of Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240) in Damascus, the resting place of the latter. By the time Ibn Taimiyah completed his education, not more than forty to forty-five years had elapsed since the death of Ibn 'Arabī, but he was by that time a niche in the hall of fame and his doctrine had captured the minds and souls of scholars and mystics in Egypt and Syria. He was recognised as the greatest exponent of *tauhīd* or the Unity of God. Shaikh Abul Fath Nasr al-Munjabi of Egypt, a devoted follower of Ibn 'Arabī, was the spiritual guide of the Prime Minister Rukn-ud-dīn Bebars al-Jāshangīr. Ibn 'Arabī's writings, specially the *Futūhāt Makkiyah* and the *Fusūs il-Hikam*, were recognised as favourite manuals of study. Ibn Taimiyah has, in his writings, acknowledged that some of Ibn Arabī's works like *Futūhāt Makkiyah*, *Kunh al-Muhkam il-Marbūt*, *Al-Durrat al-Fākhrah* and *Mutāl·a un-Najūm* contained propositions which were not only profound but these works also possessed literary excellence. Among the followers of Ibn 'Arabī, Ibn Sab'een, Sadr-ud-dīn of Konya (who was also a disciple of the Shaikh Akbar), Billiyānī and Tilmisānī were held in high esteem during the time but Ibn Taimiyah preferred Ibn 'Arabī amongst his followers which, by the way, shows that he was fair and impartial in forming an estimate of Ibn 'Arabī's teachings. The maxim followed by Ibn Taimiyah was: *If ye*

judge between mankind, that ye judge justly."[1] Comparing Ibn 'Arabi with his disciples and followers, he writes :

> "Ibn 'Arabī is nearest to Islam amongst them. His writings are comparatively seemly because he makes a distinction between manifestation and exteriority and pays due regard to the commands and prohibitions and the law. He commends moral behaviour and devotions prescribed by the earlier mystic seers and that is why a number of puritans and *sufis* adopt the mystical excercises recommended in his writings. A number of them are unable to comprehend these realities but those who come to understand and appreciate them, fathom the true meaning of his teachings."[2]

Ibn Taimiyah was conscious of the grave responsibility involved in passing a judgement on an eminent Muslim held in esteem by others. He writes in the same letter :

> "Only God is aware how one will end one's life's journey. May God grant salvation to every Muslim man or woman, dead or alive ; *Our Lord ! Forgive us and our brethren who were before us in the faith, and place not in our hearts any rancour toward those who believe. Our Lord ! Thou art Full of Pity, Merciful.*"[3]

Corroding Influence of Wahdat-ul-Wujud

However, it seems that the spirit of ascetical-mystical discipline, its popularity among the masses and the little regard paid to religious obligations by the enthusiastic propagators of Ibn 'Arabi's doctrine had given rise to an intellectual and moral confusion in Syria, then a part of the kingdom of Egypt ruled by the Turks. Its followers had developed antinomian tendencies taking up the performance of acts which

1. Q. IV : 48
2. Letter to Shaikh Nasr al-Munjabī, *Jalā ul-'Aynain*, p. 57
3. *Ibid.* (Q. 59 : 10)

violated the law and even the approved norms of decency. It was a serious situation, which, naturally, caused concern to a scholar and theologian who was not only learned but also deemed it his duty to uphold the approved and established religious institutions. In short, the way Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine of the Unity of Being was translated into action by its votaries, it could not avoid condemnation by the religious scholars for it is not the root by which a tree is known but by the fruit it bears.

Ibn Taimiyah was always extremely cautious in attributing anything to somebody else but, as he has written, Tilmisānī not only boasted of his belief in the Unity of Being but also made no secret of his actions and behaviour flowing from that belief. He was a drunkard and did not desist from committing acts regarded impermissible by the *sharī'ah*. The argument he preferred in his defence was that all existence being one, how can there be anything permissible or impermissible. Writes Ibn Taimiyah:

> "I was told by a reliable person that he used to study the *Fusūs il-Hikam* under Tilmisānī and rated the book as the work of a saint and gnostic. When he realised that some of its contents were in conflict with the teachings of the Qur'ān, he brought the matter to the notice of Tilmisānī who replied, "Qur'ān is actually replete with *shirk*, it differentiates between the Creator and the created; true *tauhīd* you will find in our works." Tilmisānī also used to assert that ecstatic revelation proves the things which fly in the face of intellect."[1]

Ibn Taimiyah says further:

> "Once a man who accompanied Tilmisānī and his friends passed by a dead dog which seemed to have had eczema. Tilmisānī's friend remarked, "This is also the Absolute Being." Thereupon Tilmisānī replied, "Is there anything

1. *Al-Furqān Bāin al-Haq Wal Bātil*, p. 145

outside His Being.? Nay, everything dwells within His Being."[1]

In his other Book, *Ar-Radd al-Aqwām 'Alā Fusūs il-Hikam* Ibn Timiyah cites another platitude of the then followers of Unity of Being. He writes:

> "A certain person was asked, "Why should the wife be allowed to a man and his mother prohibited to him when all the existence was one?" He replied, "Surely, there is no difference between them. But those who are uninitiated (with the truth of Unity) still insist that one's mother is prohibited. We also say: Yes, she is prohibited to (the ignoramuses like) you."[2]

It does not mean that all these heretical pronouncements and extravagant behaviours should be attributed to Ibn 'Arabī or his writings. He was pious, an abstainer and an ascetic who earnestly strived for the perfection of his soul, endeavoured to follow the Prophet's *sunnah*[3] and was aware of the ruses of Satan and the self,[4] yet his writings do contain such ecstatic expressions which were later stretched to justify the heretical maxims of his followers. To cite a few instances here he has written that calf worshippers during the time of Moses had in fact paid homage to God (for all existence is one) and that Moses had admonished Aaron at taking exception to the calf worship. Ibn 'Arabī presents the Prophet Moses as a knower through God who witnessed Divine manifestation in every object and took it as the essence of everything. In his view Pharaoh was perfectly justified in considering himself as "the God Most High"; his assertion really represented the essence of his God-given right to rule over the people. Further, as

1. *Al-Furqān Bāin al-Haq Wal Bātil*, p. 145
2. *Ibid.*, p. 42
3. Ibn 'Arabī belonged to the school of Imām Daūd who rejected analogy and followed the *sunnah* literally.
4. Cf. Ibn 'Arabī's *Rūh ul-Quds*

every existence is a part of the Universal Existence, Pharaoh had a greater right to claim that privilege since he had the right to rule over his people. Ibn 'Arabī goes on to say that when the magicians realised the truth of Pharaoh's statement, they acknowledged the fact by saying, "So decree what thou wilt decree. Thou wilt end for us only the life of the world." Ibn 'Arabī draws the inference that the wizards' recognition of Pharaoh as the Lord of the world meant that he was also "the Lord Most High". Ibn 'Arabī even criticizes Prophet Noah and makes much of his idol-worshipping people who, in his view, were devotees of the Supreme Being. He explains away the deluge as an overflow of divine epiphany in which the tribe of Noah was immersed.[1]

This is perhaps the reason why a number of mystics who held Ibn 'Arabī as one of the saints blessed with the proximity of essence, had forbidden their followers to go through his writings. Shaikh Muhyī-ud-dīn 'Abdul Qādir 'Idrūsī, the author of the *An-Nūr us-Sāfir* relates from his guide Shaikh Abū Bakr 'Idrūsī that the latter was never rebuked by his father save once when his father saw a portion of Shaikh Akbar's *Futūhāt Makkiyah* in his hand. He further says that although Shaikh Abū Bakr's father had strictly forbidden him to go through the *Futūhāt* and the *Fusūs*, he nevertheless insisted that one ought to regard the Shaikh Akbar as one of the eminent saints endowed with mystical knowledge.[2]

Indian followers of Ibn 'Arabī

The doctrine of the Unity of Being, imported into India during the eighth century A.H., was not a new precept for the

1. All these examples have been taken from Ibn Taimiyah's *Ar-Radd ul-Aqwam 'ala Ma fi Kitāb Fusūs il-Hikam* and *Al-Furqān Bain-al-Haq wal Bātil* wherein these have been cited from Ibn 'Arabī's *Fusūs il-Hikam*. Some followers of Ibn 'Arabī, however, hold these as later interpolations in his books.
2. *An-Nūr us-Sāfir*, p. 346

country which had already been its oldest radiating centre. There are also historians of mysticism who hold that the Muslim *sūfis* of Irān, Irāq and the countries to the west of India bad received radiations of the doctrine of existential monism from ascetical-mystical life and thought of India. Even after the advent of Islam in this country, India continued to uphold, without any break, its faith in what can be expressed as "Everything is He." The Aryan races and their thoughts, philosophies and religions have always taken kindly to the Unity of Being and religious eclecticism owing to their innate aversion to the Semitic system of a set principle of belief and conduct. Thir predilection of the people of India helped the doctrine of existential monism to take roots in the country and to flourish in the shape of a new school of thought. A large number of eminent mystics in this country such as Shāh 'Abdul Quddūs of Gangoh (d. 944/1537), Shaikh 'Abdur Razzāq of Jhanjhāna (d. 949/1542) Shaikh 'Abdul 'Azīz of Delhi, also known as Shakarbār (d. 975/1568), Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Fazlullah of Burhānpūr (d. 1029/1620) and Shaikh Muhib Ullah of Allāhābād (d. 1058/1648) supported the doctrine no less zealously than Ibn 'Arabī or the Egyptian mystic 'Umar Ibn al-Fārīdh (d. 631/1234). All these *sūfis* were either contemporaries of Ibn Taimiyah or lived during the period very close to his days.

Shaikh 'Alā ud-daulah Samnānī's opposition to Unity of Being

Most of the scholars who rejected the doctrine of the Unity of Being were, as stated earlier, strict observers of the religious law and practices of orthodoxy with no pretensions to mystical intuition of reality or ecstatic transports to higher levels of consciousness gained through strivings after the soul. Their criticisms of the doctrine were thus rejected out of hand as impulsive outbursts of the people uninitiated with the way. The first gnostic and *sūfi* who contradicted the doctrine in a sedate and thoughtful manner was Shaikh Rukn-ud-dīn 'Abul

Makārīm 'Alā-ud-daulah Samnānī.[1]

'Ala-ud-daulah Samnānī (659—736/1261—1336) was born at Samnān in Khurāsān in a wealthy and noble family whose members occupied positions of authority in the local administration. He took his lessons in the mystical discipline from Shaikh Nūr-ud-dīn 'Abdur Rahmān al-Kasraqī al-Istarā'inī (d. 717/1317), a mystic guide belonging to the Kubrawī order. He controverted the doctrine of Unity of Being, reasoned the point with its followers and expounded his view point in his letters. He held that the destination of a pilgrim of the Way was not *tauhīd* or Unity but attainment of the stage of *'ubūdiyat* or servitude. His observations and utterances compiled by his disciple Iqbāl b. Sādiq of Sistān are still extant in several libraries under the name of the *Chahl Majlis, Malfūzāt Shaikh 'Ala ud-daulah Samāni* etc. 'Abdur Rahmān Jāmī has drawn the material contained from pages 504 to 515 of the *Kitab Nafahāt ul-Uns* from the *Malfūzāt* of Samnānī.[2]

Wahdat-us-Shuhud or Unity of Manifestation

We find the doctrine of the Unity of Manifestation described as an alternative precept to the Unity of Being by two reputed personalities. They differ in their approach and inclinations but their sincerity of purpose, search for truth and sound reasoning had led them to the same conclusion as if in fulfilment of the Quranic promise: *As for those who strive in Us, We surely guide them to Our path.*[3] One of these was Shaikh ul-Islām Hāfiz Ibn Taimiyah who was essentially a scholar of Traditions, dialectician and a jurist. The other one was Makhdūm ul-Mulk Shaikh Sharaf-ud-dīn Yahya Manerī (d.782/1380), a noted mystic, who had attained the stage of gnosis. *Al-'Ubūdiyah* written by the former bears testimoney to the

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 89
2. See the article by F. Meier in the *Dā'iratul Ma'ārif Islāmiah*
3. Q. XXIX: 69

fact that he was not only conversant with the stage that can be termed as the Unity of Manifestation but was also aware that the pilgrims of the Way come across this stage after crossing the stage of the Unity of Being. He was also cognizant of the fact that even the highest stage attained by the gnostics was lower to that occupied by the prophets of God and their companions.[1] However, Ibn Taimiyah never claimed to be a master of spiritual experiences to these stages in his works.

The Makhdūm, on the other hand, delineated his personal experiences with the competence expected of him as a mystic blest with oracular perception of divine mysteries. He writes, "What is generally understood by *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* or fading away of the unreal and its complete extinction really means recession of all the existences before the Absolute Being much in the same way as stars cease to shine and bright specks lose their identity in the presence of resplendent sun." He lays bare the secret of the doctrine of *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* succinctly by an aphorism wherein he says "nihility is quite different from invisibility of a thing." Makhdum's comprehension of the reality of mystical experience is manifested by his remark that the delicate nature of subtle spiritual perception misleads many a mystic unless the succour of God is there at hand to keep him on the right path.[2]

The Need of New Master

A new Master of the Way was thus required who had traversed the stages of the *sūfī* path and attained the state of intimacy with the Ultimate Reality by traversing ecstatic states. Only a man with direct experience of the spiritual realities could have talked about them with confidence on the basis of his

1. See *Risālat ul-'Ubūdiyah*, pp. 85-88, Al-Maktabah-Islāmī, Damascus (ND).
2. *Maktūbāt Seh Sadī*, Letter No. 1, Saviours of Islamic Spirit, Vol. II, pp. 296-303

intimate cognition instead of denying certain experiences of others because of his unfamiliarity with them.

The arguments already advanced for or against the Unity of Being could broadly be divided into three categories.

First, complete acceptance of the principle and its presentation as a positive fact and the highest stage of spiritual experience.

Secondly, rejection of the doctrine as a figment of imagination and esoteric perception of an individual without any reality.

Thirdly, holding forth a parallel doctrine of the Unity of Manifestation which implied that the spiritual perception of the pilgrims of the Way did not point to the extinction of every existence in the presence of Absolute Being nor it meant that everything had passed away in God. The proposition meant that every existence remained where it was although the proximity of the Absolute Being caused them to appear as non-existent through its radiation. This was like the invisibility of the stars when the sun had risen. Expiry of every other existence in the face of Real Existence was analogous to the disappearance of the stars before the brilliance of the sun.

Mujaddid's Fresh Approach

The Mujaddid approached the problem in a new way, different from the previous three, by emphasising that the *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* or the Unity of Being was a stage in the journey of spirit striving for divine illumination wherein the mystic perceived that nothing existed save the Pure Being or that everything else was a part of the totality. At this stage the mystic apprehended that all the existences besides the Pure Being were merely its different forms and aspects, and this was what Ibn 'Arabī and the gnostics of *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd*, called *tanazzulāt* (descents) of the Perfect Being.

But according to the Mujaddid, if the pilgrim of the path

of spirit forged ahead with the help of God in the light of *sharī'ah*, he passed on to another higher stage which was *Wahdat-us-Shuhūd*.

The Mujaddid did not deny *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* which had been for ages an article of faith and the goal of spiritual journey for innumerable mystics and philosophers. Nor did he question the sincerity and godliness of Ibn 'Arabī or sublimity of his achievement in the realm of spirit. He accepted the greatness of Ibn 'Arabī and his spiritual experience but went on to add a further stage in the destination of spiritual journey which was in keeping with the Islamic creed and the tenets of the *kitāb* and the *sunnah*. Thus, instead of rejecting the findings of the earlier *sufis*, the Mujaddid added something which made their experiences and formulations not only compatible with the law but also urged them to achieve new heights in their journey of spirit.

Personal Experiences of the Mujaddid

With these introductory remarks about Shaikh Ahmad's doctrine of the Unity of Manifestation, let us now turn to his letters describing his own personal experiences. In the letter given here he has described his progress from the stage of *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* to that of *Wahdat-us-Shuhūd* to Shaikh Sūfī.

> "This humble-spirited had held the belief of unitarians since his early days. His father was expressly wedded to that school and persistently followed its practices.....As the saying goes that the son of a jurist becomes a half jurist, this meekhearted was inclined towards this system of belief and also enjoyed it until the grace of God led him to have the guidance of Muhammad al-Bāqī, the great mystic and knower through God. He guided this inglorious fellow in the discipline of Naqshbandiyah order and kept a close watch over his spiritual perfection. In a short time the deeper devotions of this exalted order disclosed to this meek-spirited the secrets of *tauhīd-i-wujūdī*

(existential unity) which was, at that time, overestimated by him. He was favoured with the spiritual insight and intuitive knowledge incidental to that stage in full measure and there was hardly anything that was not divulged to him. The subtle and dainty mysteries described by Ibn 'Arabī were unveiled to the sight of this poorling who found himself at the pinnacle of what is called *tajjalī-i-dhātī* (vision of the Being) by Ibn 'Arabī and beyond which there was no stage according to him. The intuitive knowledge and ecstatic insights of the stage regarded by Ibn 'Arabī as marked off for the highest saints were granted to this meek-hearted in all its details. This was a stage of ecstatic rapture in unicity so overpowering that in the letters I had written to my revered guide in those days, I had penned certain verses evincing that intoxication.

"This state of intoxication persisted for long, the months changed into years, until the unbounded mercy of God showed its face and unveiled the mystery of "*Naught is as His likeness*".[1] The revelations signifying unitive experience and Unity of Being gradually faded away. The cognitions of *ihātah* (encompassment), *sarayān* (immanence), *qurb* (nearness) and *maiyyat-i-dhātī* (convergence with the Being) gave place to an implicit conviction that the Absolute Being had nothing in common with anything witnessed in this finite world; the former encompassed and was proximate to the letter in its knowledge only. This is realy the creed of the true believers whose endeavours may find acceptance with God. His Being is pure, not united with anything; incomparable and incomprehensible while the world is wholly contaminated and corrupt. How can He that is indeterminate be the essence or like unto what is qualified and how can the necessary be given the name of the possible? The eternal cannot be contingent; one excluded

1. Q. XLII: 11

from nothingness cannot be the same as that liable to extinction. Interchangeability of the truths is an impossibility and to think that it can be so would neither be correct, nor compatible with reason, nor yet the law. It is strange that Shaikh Muhī-ud-dīn and his followers recognise God as incomprehensible and His attributes as illimitable yet they attest their own circumfluence of and esoteric nearness to the Absolute Being. The fact of the matter consists of what the scholars of *Ahl-i-Sunnat* have held that the comprehension and proximity to God is possible in knowledge only.

"The period during which this humble self acquired the knowledge contravening the mystical apprehensions of the Unity of Being was most gruesome to him for he did not consider anything more important than this patricular concept of *tauhīd*. He used to beseech God with tears in his eyes to let him continue with the experiences incidental to that stage. At last, all the veils were cast aside and the inescapable reality dawned on him. Then he came to know that the world is like a mirror unto the perfection of the God's attributes but the reflection seen in the mirror is not the same as the thing reflected nor the shadow is the essence of the thing from which it is projected—as believed by those adhering to the *tauhīd-i-wujūdī* (Existential Unity).

"The issue can be elucidated by giving an example. Supposing there is an erudite scholar possessing encyclopedic knowledge who desires to bring his knowledge to light and demonstrate his competence not known to others. He invents for the purpose certain alphabets and sounds. In a case like this it cannot be claimed that these alphabets and sounds which are just a means of exhibiting his competence, either encompass or embody his knowledge and proficiency. They cannot even be said to possess the nearness to or proximity of existence with him. They

would rather bear the same relationship to him as an argument has to the thing argued. The alphabets and the sounds are no more than the signs of his competence and whatever relationships (such as essence, unity, circumfluence or esoteric nearness or else co-presence of the two) are established thereby are merely illusory. Nevertheless, since the competence of the said scholar and the alphabets and sounds correspond to the manifest and manifested or the argument and thing argued, certain people have come to conjure up these as affinities. In truth and reality, however, the competence (of the learned) is unrelated to his manifestations. Similarly, the Absolute Reality and its creations do not have any affinity beyond the argument and the thing argued or the manifestation and the contents of manifestation.....The repeated contemplations upon *tauhid* or Unity lead certain persons to have a psychic perception of an illusory object because continuous meditation impresses upon their minds certain forms of their own imagination. There are persons who come to cherish a liking for repetitive remembrance of *tauhid* while others incline towards it because of their infatuation with the Unity of Being. For the love causes a lover to conceive nothing except his beloved, he can visualise only what he loves. This, however, does not mean that the objects not adored by him cease to exist; for that will be against the reality of perception, reason and the law. The passion of love often leads the people to believe in the comprehension and nearness to the Absolute Being—this concept of *tauhid* is on a higher plane than the first two and depends on the spiritual mood, yet even this is not supported either by the reality of things or reason. Any effort to prove it compatible with the reason or the law amounts to specious reasoning. In effect, it is the result of erroneous mystical experience which assumes the shape of a juristic error and then it chronically refuses to recognise its mistake.

The reason for it can, in a way, be attributed to the rapturous state of the mystic."[1]

Unity of existence

In another letter written to Shaikh Farīd Bukhārī, Shaikh Ahmad explains the difference between the Unity of being and the Unity of Manifestation.

"The knowledge of *tauhīd* (unity) obtained by the *sufīs* during their journey of spirit is of two kinds, that is, *tauhīd-i-shuhūdī* and *tauhīd-i-wujūdī*. *Tauhīd-i-shuhūdī* or the Unity of Manifestation consists of witnessing the One. The traveller of spirit has his gaze fixed on the One Existence alone while *touhīd-i-wujūdī* or the Unity of Being means exclusive awareness of the One and perceiving all other existences as nonentities."[2]

In this letter to Shaikh Farīd he continues to elaborate the point further:

"Supposing a man is convinced of the existence of sun, but this conviction, by no means, obliges the non-existence of the stars. He will indeed, not see the stars when he beholds the sun. He shall then observe only the sun. Although he will not see the stars but he would know that the stars are not non-existent. He would rather be aware that the stars have not perished but are not visible because of the radiance of blazing light emitted by the sun."[3]

In the same letter the Mujaddid tells us that the realisation of the Unity of Manifestation dawns upon a mystic at an stage subsequent to the experience of the Unity of Being:

"My revered guide Khwājā Bāqī Billāh used to have faith in the Unity of Being as he has himself explained it in his letters and writings. However, the benevolence

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 31
2. *Ibid.*, No. 43
3. *Ibid.*

of God helped him at last to advance from that stage and guided him to the road of higher spiritual experiences which widened his restricted cognition."[1]

Mujaddid goes on further to describe the real import of the doctrine preached by Ibn 'Arabī and his followers in the following words:

"They swear by the *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd*. They hold that there is one existential being and it is that of God. In their view the world is merely nominal, unreal although they recognise that it is cognitively discernible. They say that the extraneous world did not get even the scent of Real Existence. They consider the world as the *zill* or adumbration of the God but this adumbration in only perceptive; in reality and extraneous existence it is simply a nihility."[2]

In another letter which was written to one Yār Muhammad of Badakhshān, the Mujaddid recapitulates his progress from the stage of *Whadat-ul-Wujūd*. He writes:

"The writer of these lines was originally convinced of the *Whadat-ul-Wujūd*. He was convined of *tauhīd* since his childhood days and placed reliance on it even though he had no glimpse of its illumination by that time. When he took to the path of spirit, he was first favoured with its illumination and remained at that stage for a fairly long time. Several of the cognitions belonging to that stage were granted to him which solved the problems normally faced by the pilgrims of spirit at that stage. It was after a long time that this humblehearted advanced to the next stage but then he found himself apprehensive of *tauhīd-i-wujūdī* or the existential unity. This diffidence did not amount to its rejection but could be regarded as a bashful

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 43
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 160 to Yār Muhammad Al-Jadīd al-Badakhshī al-Tālqānī.

acceptance of the doctrine. He remained in this condition of self-distrust for quite some time until he finally rejected the doctrine since the relatively lower position occupied by it was demonstrated to him. Thereafter he attained the stage of *zilliyāt* or adumbration which is a stage higher than the former. This meek-spirited had no choice in his rejection of the doctrine and, in fact, he never wanted to go ahead of the stage which had been the destination of many an eminent mystic. But, when he reached the stage of *zilliyāt* he found that his own being and the world were adumbrations (of the Ultimate Being). He longed to remain even at the latter stage since he still considered *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* as the acme of illumination and the two stages were rather congenial to one another. The fate had, however, willed it otherwise. The grace and mercy of God helped him to advance to still higher stages and ultimately he attained the stage of *'abdiyat* (servitude). It was then that he realised the perfection and loftiness of that stage. Then he repented and regretted his longings for the lower stages. Had this poor in spirit not been gradually advanced from one stage to another and also not been shown their ascending orders, he would have perhaps taken this stage (of *'abdiyat*) as a regression of spiritual experience for he had earlier been convinced that there was no stage higher to the *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd*. Sure enough, *Allah sayeth the truth and showeth the way.*"[1]

Moderate Views about Ibn 'Arabī

Mujaddid disagreed with Ibn 'Arabī but his criticism of the latter was always moderate and showed no signs of rancour against him. In a letter included in the first volume of the

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol I, No. 160 to Yār Muhammad Al-Jadīd al-Badakshi

Maktūbāt he expresses his views about Ibn 'Arabī:

> "This meek-spirited considers Shaikh Muhyī-ud-dīn as one of the elects but regards his doctrines (which are against the faith of the Muslims and teachings of the *kitāb* and the *sunnah*) as incorrect and injurious.....There are people who have either exalted or denounced him and strayed far from the road of moderation Some of these persons denounce him and controvert his doctrines and ecstatic illuminations while there are others who follow him unreservedly, are convinced of the truth of his doctrines and bring forth arguments and evidences in his favour. There is not the least doubt that both these groups have been guilty of either overrating or belittling the Shaikh and have left the golden mean..... It is rather strange that Shaikh Muhyi-ud-dīn seems to be one of the elects and the saved but most of his spiritual illuminations which do not agree with the faith of the true believers are erroneous and untrue."[1]

The difference between the stand taken by the Mujaddid, on the one hand, and that of the opponents and followers of Ibn 'Arabi, on the other, has been stated by him clearly in another letter addressed to Khwājā Jamāl-ud-dīn Husain. He writes:

> "This humble self differs with the followers of the Unity of Being in what they call its *kashf* (mystical revelation) and *shuhūd* (spiritual apprehension). The learned are convinced of the harmfulness of these precepts (that is, Unity of Being and denial of all existence besides that of God). This poorling has no doubt about the excellence of the states and illuminations of the *tauhid-i-wujūdī* (Existential Unity) provided they also lead one to go beyond it."

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 266 to Khwāja 'Abdullah and Khwājā 'Ubaid Ullah
2. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. II, No. 42, to Khwājā Jamāl-ud-dīn Husain

Opposition to Existential Unity

One might ask that if Existential Unity was an intermediary stage traversed by innumerable mystics in every age, many of whom lingered on at that stage, and only a few were helped by the grace of God to go beyond it to the higher level of the Unity of Manifestation, then what was wrong with it? Why did the Mujaddid criticize it so vehemently and why did he insist on the affirmation as well as superiority of the Unity of Manifestation?

The reason is that a good number of mystics among the adherents of the Unity of Being, some of whom were even contemporaries of the Mujaddid, had taken the doctrine as a means of achieving freedom from religious observances and legalistic morality prescribed by the *sharī'ah*. Such mystics had been led astray by the misconception that since everything was a fragment of the Ultimate Reality or was the Reality itself, there was no reason to discriminate between truth and untruth, faith and infidelity. They thought that the *sharī'ah* was for the common, uninitiated folk while the Unity of Being constituted a higher principle meant for the elects, the mystics and the gnostics, who were to establish contact with the source and being of the Supreme Reality. In the tenth century India, when the Mujaddid was passing through his formative stages of intellectual and spiritual perfection, the whole country was resounding with songs eulogizing the doctrine of Unity of Being, placing faith on a par with infidelity and sometimes even preferring the latter to the former.[1] Innumerable verses praising infidelity were then familiar tunes with the masses who took them as oracles of self-evident truth. In one such verse the proposition presented was that:

Belief and infidelity are bosom friends,
One who has'nt infidelity has no faith.

1. The famous Urdu poet of the thirteenth century, Mirzā Ghālib gave

(Continued on the next page)

This verse was explained by another writer in the following manner.

"It means that Islam resides in infidelity, and infidelity in Islam, or, as the Qur'ān says: *Thou causest the night to pass into the day, and Thou causest the day to pass into the night.*[1] Here the night stands for infidelity and the day for Islam."[2]

The same writer quotes the verse:

Love is affiliated with infidelity,
Unbelief is the essence of mendicity.

Thereafter, the writer goes on to explain the verse as follows:

> "Knowledge is the greatest veil. The end of this knowledge is *'ubūdiyat* which is also the greatest veil. If this great mask is removed Islam gets blended with infidelity and infidelity with Islam; then the essence of Godhood and true devotion emerges from it."[3]

Mujaddid, endowed with a fervent zeal as well as a deep insight into the essentials of the faith, was one of those who have been predicted to appear from time to time as renewers of faith in an authentic Tradition of the holy Prophet.

> "The knowledge will be inherited by pious and God-fearing men of every race who will contradict the exaggerations of the credulous, sophistications of the misguided and misinterpretations of the ignorant persons in this religion."[4]

The promise made in this Tradition has always stimulated

(Continued from previous page)

expression to the same principle in this verse:

We are unitarians and our creed is obliteration of rituals,
The religious orders, when effaced, become a part of belief.

1. Q. III: 27
2. *Risālah 'Ishqiyah*, p. 47
3. *Ibid.*, p. 73
4. *Mishkāt, Kitābul 'Ilm.*

the Muslims of India to undertake an intellectual and theological reassessment of the bases of faith in a most comprehensive manner. The Mujaddid had marked that the grip of the law was losing its hold on the community which was gradually being impoverished of its reverence and devotion to the *sharī'ah*. He wrote in a letter addressed to Shaikh Farīd Bukhārī:

> "Most of the people have either owing to common usages or the categories of knowledge adapted to their own inclinations, or even because of infidelity and unbelief taken to Existential Unity. They consider everything to be a part of Reality or the Reality itself and thus they contrive to get rid of the obligations of *sharī'ah* in one way or the other. They are indolent and slack in following the commandments of the *sharī'ah* and seem to be well satisfied with their behaviour. If they ever acknowledge the need of acting on the precepts of the *sharī'ah*, they take them as something incidental and collateral to the real purposes of the faith. The ultimate objective of the *sharī'ah*, in their view, is to attain the higher mystical consciousness. God forbid! I seek refuge of God from such irreligious beliefs."[1]

He goes on to say in the same letter:

> "Several groups flaunting themselves in the garb of *sufīs* are nowadays openly preaching Existentialist Monism. They consider that this doctrine holds the key to the perfection of spirit. They have wandered far from reality because of these conceptions. They conceive the sententious expressions of their spiritual guides in the light of their own figments of imagination which keep them self-complacent."[2]

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 43
2. *Ibid.*

Greatness of Shaikh Ahmad

The greatness of Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid Alf Thānī consisted not only in exposing the deceptive nature of the mystic stage of annihilation represented by *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd*, beyond which there were still higher stages of spiritual illumination, but also in the fact that he was able to verify his findings through his own experiences. He traversed the stages and states of spiritual journey and was able to describe the intuitive knowledge of Reality attained through that process as was not done earlier by any traveller of the path. Peter Hardy, though not an authority on the subject, has correctly stated that "Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī's great achievement was paradoxically to win Indian Islam away from *sufi* extremism by means of mysticism itself. Perhaps his success was due to deep personal understanding of the meaning and value of what he rejected."[1]

Compromising Attitude of the Later Scholars

Before we end the discussion it seems necessary to mention, in all fairness, that save by the Mujaddidyah order represented by Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm who propagated his father's doctrine both within the country and abroad, the unqualified and clearly distinct stand taken by the Mujaddid in regard to the *Wahdat-us-Shuhūd* (Unity of Manifestation) was sobered down by the later mystics and scholars. Soon after his death the *sūfi* orders, some of which even traced their spiritual descent to him, started steering a middle course between the *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* and *Wahdat-us-Shuhūd*, indicating a clearly compromising attitude between the two doctrines. Some of the eminent scholars even went to the extent of claiming that the difference between the two precepts signified merely a verbal contest while others argued that the Mujaddid actually misunderstood

1. P. Hardy in *Sources of Indian Traditions* (comp.) W. Theodore De Bary, (New York-1958), p. 449

Ibn 'Arabī since he had not gone through all the works of the latter. This was perhaps the reason why Ghulām Yahyā of Bihār (d. 1180/1767), a disciple of the famous Mujaddiyah Shaikh Mirzā Mazhar Jānjānān, wrote the *Kalimāt-ul-Haq* at the instance of his spiritual guide. He spelt out the thought and doctrine of Shaikh Ahmad in plain words and controverted the mollifying approach of the then mystics claiming to derive spiritual inspiration from Shaikh Ahmad's Mujaddidyah order.

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd

Among the illustrious mystics of later times Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd (d. 1246/1831) had the honour of unequivocally maintaining the doctrine of *Wahdat-us-Shuhūd* on the basis of his own ecstatic illumination.[1] A mystic as well as a fighter in the way of God, he belonged to the Mujaddidyah Ahsāniyah order[2] whose mystical experience shows no trace of Unity of Being and steers clear of all attempts to reconcile *Wahdat-ul-Wujūd* with *Wahdat-us-Shuhūd*[3]

1. Saiyid Ahmad might have inherited the mystical knowledge from his own forefathers among whom Shāh Saiyid 'Alam Ullah was a distinguished disciple of Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī or it might have been due to his own intuitive knowledge. For a detailed account see *Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd* by Muhi-ud-dīn Ahmad.
2. The mystical order known as Ādamiyah and Ahsāniyah is associated with Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī, an eminent disciple and deputy of Shaikh Ahmad.
3. See *Sirāt-i-Mustaqīm* and the *Hidāyat Rābi'yah Dar Bayān-i-Thamarāt Hubb 'Āshqī, Ifādah* 1, p. 12, Maktabah Salfiyah, Lahore (N. D.)

CHAPTER VIII

FROM AKBAR TO JAHANGIR

Some Worthy Scholars and Mystics

Before we discuss the efforts made by the Mujaddid which eventually turned over a new leaf in the religious policy of the Mughals, the prevalent misconception that Akbar's eclecticism did not evoke any antagonism or resistence among the people needs to be dispelled. It is incorrect to assume that by the time of Akbar's rule Islam had lost its vigour in the country so completely that everybody preferred to pass over this directive of the holy Prophet:

> "Whoever of you witnesses something being done against the precepts of the *sharī'ah* or a prohibited act being committed, he ought to forcibly stop it. If one is unable to do so, one ought to disclaim and denounce it but if this be also not possible, one ought to hate it with all his heart. This is the lowest degree of faith."[1]

The historians and biographers have preserved accounts of the courage shown by several persons in registering their displeasure at Akbar's un-Islamic ordinances.

1. *Sahīhain*

Shaikh Ibrāhīm Muhaddith of Akbarābād (d. 1001/1593) once came to the *'Ibādat Khānā* on the invitation of the Emperor but he did not perform the prescribed ceremonials of the royal court. Instead of being cowed down by the royal splendour he even tried to persuade Akbar to follow the path of Islam. Shaikh Husain of Ajmer (d. 1009/1601) left the place when Akbar visited the shrine of Khwāja Mu'in-ud-dīn Chishtī. Consequently, he was suspended from trusteeship of the shrine and the attached convent, and ordered to leave for Hijāz, but he refused to prostrate before the Emperor even on his return to India. He incurred the King's displeasure and spent several years as a prisoner in the fort of Bhakkar but never consented to perform the court ceremonials. Shaikh Sultān of Thānesar was a courtier very close to Akbar and it was at his instance that Shaikh Sultān had translated the *Mahābhārata* into Persian. He offended Akbar by sacrificing a cow and was ordered into banishment to Bhakkar. Akbar pardoned him after sometime on the recommendation of 'Abdur Rahīm Khānkhānā and appointed him as the revenue collector at Thānesar. He was again accused of following the precepts of Islam and ultimately ordered to be executed in 1007/1599.

The courage of convictions exhibited by Shahbāz Khān Kamboh (d. 1008/1600) was perhaps unsurpassed by others. He was a high ranking noble who had been appointed as Mīr Bakhshī by the Emperor but he never hesitated in expressing his views freely in the royal presence. He neither shaved his beared nor took wine, nor yet ever showed any inclination to join the religious order invented by Akbar. Shāh Nawāz Khān, author of the *Ma'āthir-ul-Umarā* is on record that the Emperor was once strolling by the side of a tank at Fatehpūr Sīkrī while Shahbāz Khān was in his attendance. Akbar took hold of the hand of Shahbāz Khān and started chatting with him while taking the stroll. Everybody present on the occasion thought that Shahbāz Khān would not be able to take his hand off and would have to forgo the *maghrib* (sun-set) prayers. Shahbāz

Khān also used to keep mum and busy himself in the remembrance of God between the *'asr* (late afternoon) and *maghrib* prayers. As soon as Shahbāz Khān found that it was the time for *maghrib* prayers, he sought the permission of Akbar for it. Akbar, however, replied, "Don't leave me alone, you can offer the prayers later on." But Shahbāz Khān took his hand off and, spreading a sheet of cloth on the ground, started offering the prayers. After the prayer ended, he busied himself in the recollection and invocation of God's names. The Emperor kept standing before Shahbāz Khān, denouncing and threatening him at his insolence. Amir Abul Fath and Hakīm 'Alī Gilānī, who happened to be present on the occasion, realised the gravity of the situation and tried to divert the attention of the Emperor. They said, "We also deserve Your Majesty's attention." At last the Emperor was cooled down and went away with them leaving Shahbāz Khān.

Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir of Uch was also a man of great courage. One night when he was at Fatehpūr Sīkrī opium was offered to him by the Emperor but he refused to take it. The Emperor was displeased with him on account of what he said on the occasion. Another day in the *Ibādat Khāna* at Fatehpūr, after the congregational prayers had been recited the Shaikh busied himself with his supererogatory devotions. The Emperor said, "Shaikh, perform your supererogatory devotions in your own house." The Shaikh replied, "Sire, in this kingdom your commands have no force." The Emperor felt annoyed and retorted, "Since you do not like my rule, remain no longer in my kingdom." Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir immediately left the assembly and retired to Uch where he followed the sublime practice of his predecessors by dedicating himself to public weal and remembrance of God. Another Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir of Lahore (d. 1022/1613) had to leave India for Hijāz on account of his firmness on Islamic beliefs and practices. Mirzā 'Azīz-ud-dīn Koka (d. 1033/1625) was foster brother of Akbar and also one for whom Akbar had tender feelings, but he had

to suffer great privations owing to his disapproval of the Emperor's religious views. He was Governor of Gujarāt and also honoured with the title of Khān 'Āzam but he had to flee to Dieu on April 3, 1593 and departed thence for pilgrimage to Mecca. Shaikh Munawwar Abdul Hamīd of Lahore (d. 1015/1606) was another man of firm convictions who was appointed as Sadr by Akbar in 985/1577. He incurred the wrath of the King owing to his devotion to Islam. Akbar ordered to ransack his property including even his books, then summoned him to his capital and placed him behind the bars where he breathed his last.[1]

The recrudescence of rebellion in Bihar and Bengal is also attributed by certain historians to the religious policy of Akbar.

During the initial years of Jahāngīr's rule the court etiquettes and the ordinances promulgated by Akbar, except for the measures that were expressly anti-Islamic, continued to be followed until Jahāngīr himself developed a respectful attitude towards Islam and the *sharī'ah* brought by the Prophet. A number of scholars and mystics discountenanced the un-Islamic practices of the royal court during this period, and some even refused to step beyond the limits of the *sharī'ah* despite the hardships they had to face for their courageous actions. One of these men of steadfast faith was Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Ilyās Husainī Ghurghushtī, who hailed from the north-western regions and is said to have attained spiritual perfection. He was summoned by Jahāngīr to his court and ordered to perform the ceremonials prescribed for the royal court. He refused and remained in detention for three years in the Gwālior fort. He was set free in 1020/1611 by Jahāngir who also brought him back to Agra with him.[2]

1. All these instances have been quoted from the *Nuzhat ul-Khawātir*, Vol. V.
2. *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. V.

There is, however, no doubt that the credit for organising a systematic resistance to the religious degeneration promoted by the state policy and its reformation goes to Shaikh Ahmad. He continued to strive with single-hearted devotion to his cause until he succeeded in bringing about a silent revolution which is unmatched in the history of reform and revival in other Muslim countries. His religio-political movement nullified the consequences of Akbar's policy and successively brought to the throne of Mughals sovereigns who showed a greater devotion to the religion than their predecessors until Aurangzīb came to take the reins of government into his hand.

Beginning of Mujaddid's Reformative Effort

Jalāl-ud-dīn Akbar died in 1014/1605 when Shaikh Ahmad was forty-three years of age. The last phase of Akbar's reign had posed a threat not only to the existence of Islam as a dominant religion but even to its continuance as a faith free to uphold its doctrines and observances. This was the time when Shaikh Ahmad had been devoting his attention exclusively to his own spiritual progress and attainment of esoteric knowledge. Hardly anyone among the nobles and grandees of the state knew him or was even aware of his spiritual ascent, sincerity or devotion to God. Shaikh Ahmad had, upto that time, not been able to grapple with the reality on interior levels which could serve as a testimony for communicating his intense spiritual experiences to the members of the royal court and thereby exert a sobering influence on the machinery of the state and its policies. The Emperor was also surrounded by an entourage of the ilk discouraging sincerity of purpose and sobriety of religious thought in the royalty. These courtiers and henchmen had virtually formed an iron curtain that allowed no whiff of fresh air to reach the Emperor who was kept ignorant of the likes and dislikes of the common people. In a country which had sustained powerful Muslim kingdoms for the past hundreds of years, Islam was facing

conditions thus depicted by the Qur'ān:

> "When the earth, vast as it is, was straitened for them, and their own souls were straitened for them till they bethought them that there is no refuge from Allah save toward Him."[1]

Things, however, changed with Jahāngīr's accession to the throne in 1014/1605. He was not religious-minded, obviously, because of his upbringing under the care of a father avowedly anti-Muslim, nor was he a practising Muslim; yet he was neither inimical to Islam nor unduly impressed by any alien culture, thought or philosophy, nor yet was he desirous of inventing a new religion or promulgating novel rules for the conduct of the state. In other words, if he was not a defender of the faith, he was also not its adversary. The rulers who are fond of sport, art and good living normally take little interest in introducing new and novel measures for the governance of the country for they get satisfied with the things like a critical taste in matters of dress and pleasures of the table. But, such persons generally possess an instinct of reverence for those righteous and heavenly-minded persons who have raised themselves above worldly desires, fame and honour. Such persons are thus more accessible to truth than those who arrogate themselves to the position of the founder of any new school of thought or philosophy of life.

Jahāngīr belonged to the category of sovereigns known for their catholicity and open-mindedness. It was not difficult for the sagacious and discerning persons to realise that his accession to the throne was the opportune time for attempting a gradual transformation of the state and its religious policy, and bringing them back on the right path.

Proper Line of Action

Three courses of action were then open to the persons like

1. Q. IX: 118

Shaikh Ahmad and others well-versed in religion and endowed with spiritual perfection. Their religious enthusiasm could take one of these courses:

(1) To withdraw to their closet leaving the country and the state to go unrestrained on its way, and to occupy themselves with the remembrance of God, contemplative concentration and guidance of the people desirous of traversing the path of spirit. This was, in fact, the course adopted by hundreds of scholars and mystics of the time who were spreading the light of faith and morals to innumerable persons in their hospices spread all over country.

(2) To abandon all hopes of reforming a kingdom and its ruler who was a Muslim in name only, and to start a movement for opposing the ruler whose manners and morals were patently un-Islamic. It was the path of resistance and struggle against a state which was decidedly opposed to and inimical to Islam. An attempt for a military takeover or political revolution by giving a call to one's disciples and other dissatisfied sections of the people for joining hands to install another virtuous and believing king, even if he belonged to the house of Bābur, for changing the existing state of affairs as well as religious policy of the government, was the second alternative open at the time.

(3) To establish contact with the courtiers and grandees having the ears of the Emperor with a view to inviting their attention to the pitiable condition in which Islam and Muslims were placed at the time was the third option. This was to be done for urging the nobility to advise the Emperor for doing something to ameliorate their condition. This course, however, required that instincts of faith and morals were aroused in the nobility who were, on top of it, also convinced of the absolute selflessness and sincerity of the reformer. The reformer had to keep himself aloof from worldliness, honour and position so that not even his

worst enemy could accuse him of having any ulterior motive in his sacred task.

The line of action first indicated was neither suited to the temperament of Shaikh Ahmad nor did it accord with the higher reaches of his spirituality. It was also unbecoming for a man inflamed and imbued with the religious zeal for reform and renovation. The Mujaddid had had an intuition from the day he had attained spiritual perfection that the Providence had earmarked him for some higher task than merely guiding the travellers of spirit. He had once alluded to his own feelings by quoting the obseveration of Khwājā 'Ubaid Ullah Ahrār (d. 895/1490), a noted mystic of his own order.

> "Were I to devote myself to taking disciples and their guidance, no spiritual guide in the world would find a follower. But God has entrusted some other task to me and that is to rainforce the validity and centrality of the *shari'ah* and to strengthen the *millat*."

Shaikh Ahmad had also elucidated the observation of Khwājā Ahrār in this manner:

> "He used to pay visits to the kings and convert them into his admirers and followers through his spiritual power and then ask them to enforce the *shari'ah* as the law of the land."[1]

The second alternative would have answered the purpose of a short-sighted reformer having an ulterior political design. Such persons, normally hasty and skeptical, prefer confrontation to well-meaning advice and selfless service with the result that they end up as adversaries of the powers that be. They render the task of religious reform and renovation even more difficult by their indiscreet actions. This is obviously not the method to be used by one desiring penetration of the revealed law into the life and thought of the community, particularly if it is desired not for one's own personal advantage or the benefit

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 65, to Khān 'Āzam

of one's group or party but for the pleasure of God alone. Such a reformer never cares as to who enforces the divine law into the public life of the Muslim community. Any action in this direction supported by the force of arms was, in the conditions then obtaining in India, fraught with grave dangers and might well have proved suicidal for Islam. The foundations of Mughal kingdom had been entrenched deep into the soil of India by Bābur; Humāyūn had strived hard to regain his lost glory; Akbar had given stability and strength to the empire by his successive victories and no streak of weakness in the Mughal power was visible by that time. An ambitious king like Sher Shāh Sūrī and his able successor Salīm Shāh had failed to dislodge the Mughal supremacy and so had misfired all the subsequent insurrections and revolts against that kingdom. Even if it were possible to dethrone the Mughal rulers, there was every likelihood that the Rājpūts who manned a number of higher positions and had already gained considerable influence and power during the reign of Akbar, would have stepped in to take the reins of government in their hands, which would have sounded a death-knell to the supremacy of Muslims in the country for ever.

An experiment of that kind had, in any case, been already made and failed. Shaikh Bā Yazīd, known by the contradictory appellations of *Pīr-i-Roshan* and *Pīr-i-Tārīk*, had raised the banner of revolt against Akbar as the head of Roshanā'īs in the form of a religious movement. The Roshnā'īs had operated from their headquarters in the Koh Sulaimān and captured Khaibar Pass in order to annex the contiguous areas. They held the powerful army of the mughals at bay for several years. Akbar sent expeditions under Rājā Mān Singh and Rājā Bīrbal, both of whom were uncussessful in subduing the Roshanā'īs and the latter even lost his life in an encounter with them. The Roshnā'īs had later on captured even Ghaznī but their power was eventually broken during the reign of Jahāngīr. The fanatical community of the Roshnā'īs was

ultimately annihilated after Shāhjahān had mounted the throne but no good had come out of the Roshnā'īs' insurrections except disorder and chaos. Ultimately crushed by the Mughals, the Roshnā'īs have only left their name on the pages of history.

Armed uprisings, even if undertaken with the aim of bringing about some improvement, always invite the rancour of the ruling circles who take the religion itself as their adversary and start liquidating the entire religious-minded class. This was perhaps the reason why when Mahābat Khān rose up in arms in 1035/1626, about four or five years after Shaikh Ahmad had been released from the Gwālior Jail, all those who were sagacious and farsighted had tried to dissuade Mahābat Khān from his course of action. That the Mujaddid opted for a constructive and dependable line of action rather than taking a risky and negative path bespeaks of his wisdom and intelligence.

The Mujaddid had thus only one course left open to him and it was to establish contacts with the courtiers and nobles who were, in any case, the followers of Islam. He knew fully well that most of them were not a party to the un-Islamic innovations of Akbar, some detested those measures but were helpless, while others even possessed the zeal and enthusiasm for their faith. Some of the nobles had been on friendly terms with him and his spiritual guide Khwājā Bāqī Billāh, if not actively devoted to them. These nobles were also aware of his sincerity and selflessness as well as his well-meaning anxiety for the religion. Nawāb Saiyid Murtazā alias Shaikh Farīd (d. 1025/1616), Khān Āzam Mirzā Koka (d. 1033/1624), Khān Jahān Lodī (d. 1040/1630), Sadr Jahān of Pihānī (d. 1027/1618) and Lālā Beg Jahāngīrī were some of the prominent nobles well-disposed to Islam.

Thoughts that breathe and words that burn

Shaikh Ahmad started writing letters to these nobles and

grandees and poured the full tide of eloquence in his writings. In vigour and force, grace and effectiveness and expressiveness these letters occupy a unique position and can be favourably compared to similar writings in any language penned anywhere in the world. They still possess the charm and spirit although they were written several centuries ago.[1] It can easily be imagined how these letters would have warmed the blood of those to whom they were addressed. These letters were, in truth and reality, the messages of a broken heart or a restless soul giving a clarion call for the greatest and most successful reformatory movement. And they did transform the character of the great Mughal Empire during the tenth century of Hijrah.

Letters to the Nobles and Grandees

A large number of letters written by Shaikh Ahmad were addressed to Nawāb Saiyid Farīd,[2] who occupied a prominent

1. For an estimate of the literary value of these letters one may go through the portion dealing with the *Maktūbāt Seh Sadī* of Makhdūm Shaikh Yahyā Manerī and the *Maktūbāt Imām Rabbānī* of Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid Sirhindī in Vol. II of the *Saviours of Islamic Spirit* by the author.
2. Popularly known as Saiyid Farīd and Shaikh Farīd, his name was Nawāb Murtazā b. Ahmad Bukhārī. He was a man of multidimensional activities. A general, an administrator and a scholar, he had abundant zeal for religion and was known for his generosity, and piety and devotion to men of God. He had been appointed to the post of Mīr Bakshī by Akbar while Jahāngīr further raised his position and conferred the titles of Sāhib-i-Saif-o-Qalam (Master of the sword and pen) and Murtazā Khān on him. He was appointed Governor of Gujarāt and then of the Punjab. He was so magnanimous that often he parted with his clothes to meet the needs of the poor and the destitute. He used to deal out stipends to the widows and the poor, to support the orphans and to meet the expenses of girls' marriages belonging to poor families. About one and a half thousand persons were invited everyday to partake their meals at his table. The city of Farīdābād takes its name from him. He died in 1025/1616 (*Nūzhat-ul-Khawātir*, Vol. V.).

place among the courtiers and provincial governors during the reign of Akbar. He was one of the trusted courtiers of Akbar since the beginning of his rule. He was also devoted to Khwāja Bāqī Billāh. Shaikh Ahmad persuaded Saiyid Bukhārī, on account of the latter's zeal for religion, to prevail upon Jahāngīr to repeal heretical regulations that had been enforced by Akbar and to replace them by measures consistent with the law of Islam.

Unfortunately, these letters have no indication of the dates on which they were written which could have brought to light several aspects of the gradual development of Shaikh Ahmad's reformatory endeavour and the way he impressed his views upon the top officials who paved the way, by using their good offices with the Emperor, to change the government's religious policy, step by step, from its anti-Islamic orientation to a pro-Islamic current. We have therefore, tried to present the letters of the Mujaddid in a choronological order according to our best judgement.

A letter written to Saiyid Farīd Bukhārī, perhaps soon after the accession of Jahāngīr to the throne, expresses the wish that he would follow the right path shown by the holy Prophet and his own progenitors Thereafter, it goes on to say:

> "The King bears the same relationship to the world as does the heart to the body; if the heart is healthy the body will be fit and fine but if the heart is unsound the body will also be weakened. To cure the king is to heal the world and to cripple him is to corrupt the world.
>
> "You know full well the distress into which the followers of Islam had fallen during the preceding era. In the times of old Islam and the Muslims had never to put up with such troubles and humiliations despite the weakness of Islam; then the Muslims were, at the most, constrained to follow their faith and the infidels their own. *Unto you your religion and unto me my religion* was the moto in the days gone-by, but during the days afore the disbelievers used to force Muslims to follow their customs.

The Muslims were even compelled not to disclose the rules of their religion and if any one had the nerve to do so, he was condemned to death. Alas! What a pity! Woe betide! The followers of Muhammad (on whom be peace and mercy) were humiliated and those who denied his apostleship were honoured! The Muslims were bewailing with their bleeding hearts and their opponents were laughing to scorn them. The sun of guidance had been enveloped by wickedness and the light of truth was concealed by the veil of untruth.

"Now that the glad tidings of the removal of these impediments in the way of Islam's glory have reached everyone, high and low, and they have come to know that a son of Islam has mounted the throne, they consider it their duty to assist the king and show him the way of enforcing the *shari'ah* and strengthening the *millat*. They look forward to assist him in this task whether it can be accomplished by raising their voice or giving him a helping hand."

In the same letter the Mujaddid seeks for the reasons leading to the situation during Akbar's time, and then goes on to say that:

"The affliction during the previous era emanated from the unvirtuous scholars. They led the kings astray from the right path; the seventy-two sects within the *millat* which fell into error were groomed by these very evil scholars. There would hardly be a profane scholar whose unsoundness had not a corrupting influence on others. The ignorant sufis of these days exert the same influence as the undutiful scholars; the corruption of these sufis is communicated like a contagion. Now, if anybody has the capacity to assist in the virtuous act of promoting the faith but he fails to discharge his duty, and thereby Islam is weakened, then he would be held responsible for his inaction. It is for this reason that even this humble and incompetent fellow desires to be enlisted in the group lending

support to the kingdom of Islam and do whatever is possible for him. Since one who goes together with the majority of a class of people is taken as one of them, it may qualify this incapable person to be included in that virtuous group. He considers himself no better than the old woman who twisted strands of hemp to prepare some rope in order to be reckoned as one of the purchasers of Yūsuf. This poorling hopes to call upon your honour in the near future. He is also confident that since you enjoy the company of the Emperor and have his ears, you would do your utmost to promote the *sharī'ah* of the Prophet and extricate the Muslims from their present predicament."[1]

In another letter to Saiyid Farid, he writes:

"The poor and helpless followers of Islam, nowadays, caught in a whirlpool, look forward to the progeny of the Prophet to save them. The Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings) has said that my household was like the ark of Noah; one who got into it was saved and who got down was destroyed.[2] Make bold to attain this great objective. God has been gracious enough to bless you with glory and distinction. If you could win this great prize it will add to your personal distinction and make you excell all others. This humble person intends to call upon you for an exchange of views in regard to the measures necessary for the promotion of *sharī'ah*."[3]

There is also another letter addressed to Saiyid Farīd in which Shaikh Ahmad writes:

"Your honour! Islam is impoverished and embarrassed today. A farthing spent now in its cause will be worth several millions tomorrow. It remains to be

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 47
2. *Mishkāt*, on the authority of Abū Dharr, *Musnad Ahmad*.
3. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 51

seen who would prove himself bold-spirited enough to qualify for this greatest prize. Anyone who works for the advancement of the *shari'ah* and strengthening the *millat* does a commendable job..... But, at a time when Islam is distressed and there still live Saiyids like you, it behoves you to possess this treasure for you and your family are its owners while others are only assignees. It is a great merit to posses this virtue as one's patrimony. The Holy Prophet had once said to his companions: "You are living at a time when you would be doomed if you give up even one-tenth of the commandments of God but a time will come when those who will follow even one-tenth of it would be saved." This is the time alluded to by the Holy Prophet and we are the people referred to in this Tradition.

The ball of grace and virtue is afield,
Whats' the matter with the cavaliers, nobody takes the lead!"

After Saiyid Farīd, the next Mughal noble chosen by the Mujaddid was Khān 'Āzam[1] who was closely related to the royal family. Jahāngīr also had a high regard for him. Khān 'Āzam was devoted to the spiritual guides of Naqshbandiyah

1. Mirza 'Azīz-ud-dīn was the foster brother of Akbar. He belonged to Ghaznī from where his family migrated to Delhi. He was appointed governor of Gujarāt in 980/1572. In the year following his appointment, Akbar went by forced marches in the course of nine days from Fatehpūr to Ahmadābād and fought a battle with Muhammad Husain Mirzā who was besieging 'Āzam Khān. He was again appointed governor of Gujarāt in 997/1589, but he used to criticize harshly the new sect and creed of Akbar. He had the royal seal 'Auzāk' in his charge and held the post of 'Wakil Mutlaq'. Jahāngīr, too, appointed him on posts of higher responsibility and made him governor of Gujarāt. Although he was prevailed upon by Akbar to accept *Dīn Ilāhī* in 1594-95 A.D., he recanted from it later on. He died in 1033/1624.

order. The letter cited here was probably written to him by the Mujaddid soon after Jahāngīr took over the prerogatives of the crown.

"May Allah help you to achieve victory over the enemies of Islam and make Islam glorious. A *hadīth* of the Holy Prophet predicts that 'Islam made a beginning in unfavourable circumstances and it will be placed in the same condition towards its end.' And now that Islam has reached that stage, blessed are they who stick closer to it. Today the infidels openly deride its creed and hold the Muslims in contempt. They are not ashamed to advocate the customs of the infidels while Muslims find themselves forbidden to enforce the injunctions of the *shari'ah*. If any one takes courage to follow the commandments of his faith he is censored and reproached.

The fairy stays in hiding while the demon is making merry,
Good gracious, what's all this, nobody can fancy!

".....We find in you a well-disposed sympathizer. It is you alone who has the courage to help regain what we have lost. May Allah help you in this sacred task in the name of the Holy Prophet and his progeny on whom be peace and blessings of God. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said: 'None of you will be a faithful unless they say that you are overzealous'. Such a fervidness issuing forth from Islam is possessed by you: All praise be to Allah, the Glorified One. This is the time when a small service will be recompensed with a goodly return. No heroic deed was performed by the companions of the cave except taking refuge from persecution. At the time when enemy gains an upper hand a little fortitude exhibited by the ordinary soldiers is rewarded with gratitude but a similar hardihood during peace-time, when the enemy is far away, goes unnoticed. The opportunity of pleading the cause of true religion that you enjoy today is not a bit less virtuous

than fighting in the way of God. Utilize this opportunity and seek to get the most out of it. Know that this verbal advice is better than actual fighting. Alas that the meek-hearted like us are helpless even in this matter.....The animosity against the faith of the Prophet displayed by the previous regime is apparently not to be found in the present one: if any complacence in this regard exists at present it is only because of the administration's unacqaintance with Islam. It is very likely to grow into hostility once again making the things intolerable for Muslims."[1]

Khān Jahān,[2] another noble of Jahángīr's court, was implored in a similar manner by the Mujaddid who wrote to him:

"Were you to take up the responsibility of *sharī'ah's* execution in addition to the duties entrusted to you; the task that you would perform would be similar to that undertaken by the prophets (on whom be peace and blessings of God). You would in this manner illuminate and embellish the faith. The mandicants like us cannot hope to emulate you howsoever hard we may try to do so.

"The ball of grace and virtue is afield,
What's the matter with the cavaliers, nobody takes the lead."[3]

In another letter addressed to Khān Jahān, the Mujaddid wrote to him:

"A great advantage granted to you by God but of whose worth people are generally heedless is that the king comes of a family whose ancestors have been Muslims.

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 65
2. Khān Jahān Daulat Khān Lodhī was a grandee who was respected and relied upon by Jahāngīr. Himself a scholar he treated the learned with great respect, he was also known for his courtesy to the common people. He rebelled against Shāhjahān and was executed in 1040/1630.
3. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. III, No. 54

In the times preceding which was separated by a long spell from the Prophetic era and lay adjacent to the Judgement Day, certain educated persons consumed with covetousness gained access to the king and sowed the seeds of distrust against religion in his heart by their sycophancy. They misled the simple-hearted people from the right path. You have the ears of a great king like Jahāngīr and thus what a fine opportunity you have to let him know about the faith of the *ahl-i-sunnat* expressly or by dropping out a hint now and then. You ought to present the beliefs of the righteous people in the manner you deem fit or rather try to seek an occasion on which the truth of religion can be unfolded and the difference between Islam and infidelity made clear to him."[1]

Mujaddid also wrote letters to Lālā Beg besides the members of the royal court just mentioned. Lālā Beg held the post of Bakhshī under Sultān Murād, the second son of Akbar, and was later appointed as governor of Bihār.

"It is now a hundred years since Islam fell in a sorry plight; now it has reached the stage when the infidels are not content to follow their own customs; they rather desire to abolish Islamic practices and want that every usage of the Muslims and their way of life should be completely effaced. The matters are in such wise that if a Muslim performs certain Islamic rites (like sacrifice of a cow) he is awarded capital punishment.....If the Islamic customs and practices are allowed to take root at the outset of present kingship, the Muslims will regain some of their lost honour. God forbid, if this is delayed any more, it will create greater difficulties for them. Save us! O Helper and Avenger! Now let us see who comes forward to acquire this merit. This is a grace from Allah; He

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. II, No. 67

gives it whom He will; and Allah is the Lord of Grace."[1]

Another grandee of the Emperor's court was Sadr Jahān.[2] Shaikh Ahmad wrote to him:

> "I believe that the leaders and the Saiyids and the scholars would be busy, openly and secretly, in furtherance of the cause of religion and getting through with the right path. This weekling need hardly harp upon this issue.[3]"

Avoiding Recurrence of Mistake

At last the time came when Jahāngīr realised his mistake and expressed the desire that a few religious scholars should be summoned to the court, as had been the practice in olden times, to advise and guide the deliberations of the royal court. He asked his religious-minded courtiers to seek for four religious scholars and persuade them to remain in his court for elucidation of the matters pertaining to the *sharī'ah*. The Mujaddid was, however, not pleased with it as he was aware of the causes of previous government's waywardness and could clearly see the harmful effect of that course of action. He became rather anxious and wrote letters to Shaikh Farīd and Nawāb Sadr Jahān asking them to get the Emperor revise his order. He wrote:

> "For God's sake, do not make this mistake. Instead of having several worldly-minded scholars, select one sincere and selfless scholar who is pious and perfect in spirit."[4]

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 81
2. Mufti Sadr Jahān belonged to Pihānī (now in district Hardoi). He was a scholar of Arabic. First he was appointed as Mufti of the Royal army and thereafter held the post of Sadr. Jahāngīr had been his student and had committed to memory forty Traditions of the Prophet from him. Jahāngīr had appointed him as the Commander of 4000 troups and also granted a fief. He died in 1027/1618 at the age of 120 years. (*Nuzhat-al-Khawātir*, Vol. V)
3. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 194
4. *Ibid.*

In his letter to Shaikh Farīd, wrote Mujaddid:

"May Allah keep you on the path of your forefathers. It is learnt that the king has, owing to his inborn sense of virtue and religion, ordered you to enlist the services of four theologians who are to remain at the court and advise him on matters relating to the *shari'ah* so that he takes no action or commands anything that comes in conflict with the law of Islam. Praise be Allah and Glorified be His Name. Nothing can be more inspiring to the persecuted and downtrodden Muslims but this poorling feels obliged to put in a word of advice in this connection. I hope you would not mind the liberty he is taking since anyone who is in dire need is driven to take the extreme course.

"The point is that true and firm theologians indifferent to lust of power and position and devoted to furtherance of religion are seldom to be found these days. If one of these scholars were to take a stand on any sectarian issue just for displaying his superiority over others and getting into the good graces of the king, the cause of religion would necessarily suffer. It was the difference of opinion between the theologians which had brought bad luck to the people and the same danger is again looming large over their heads. This would actually endanger religion let alone promoting its cause. May Allah save us from this evil and calamity of impious scholars. It would be better if only one theologian was selected; it would be nice if he were also a godly soul. To keep company with such a scholar would mean companionship of the blessed. If nobody can be found from those perfect in spirit the best among the theologians ought to be selected.....I find it difficult to express myself more clearly. Just as the welfare of the people rests upon the scholars so is their deterioration dependent on them. Those who are elect among the scholars are also the best among the people

and the evil in their ranks are the most wretched of human beings to whom can be attributed every bad influence and waywardness. Someone who saw Satan sitting idle asked him the reason for his indolence. He replied, "The scholars have occupied themselves with the task I used to perform. They are misguiding the people and tempting them into corruption."

An scholar, voluptuous and self-seeking if he were,
Himself arrantly lost, how can he guide others!

"To come to the point, you have to take action after giving full thought to the matter. Once a wrong step has been taken, nothing can undo the harm inflicted. I feel ashamed of tendering an advice to a person so wise and intelligent as you are, but I have made bold to do so as I consider it a means of my own redemption."[1]

In the letters just cited attention of the grandees was invited to the troublesome situation in which Islam and Muslims had been plunged: they were urged to bring the reverses suffered by Islam in the country to the notice of the king; awaken the king's dormant Islamic consciousness; and to find out a way to bring that calamitous condition to an end. In addition to to these, the Mujaddid's letters include a large number of epistles to those nobles of the royal court who were already devoted to him. Such letters are either instructive or explanatory in regard to the discipline of mysticism or exhort the addressees to give greater importance to the saving of their souls in the hereafter than their worldly advancement. The addressees of such letters are 'Abdur Rahīm Khān Khānān (d. 1036/1627), Qalij Khān Andjānī (d. 1023/1614), Khwāja Jahān (d. 1029/1620) Mirzā Darāb b. Khān Khanān (d. 1034/1625) and Sharaf-ud-dīn Hussain Badakhshī. The instructive tone of the letters to these grandees shows a marked resemblance

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No. 53. Another letter, No. 194, addressed to Sadr Jahān, and included in Vol. I, was written on the same subject.

to those written by Shaikh Ahmad to his other spiritual disciples. He remonstrates with them on their failings, advises them the course to be followed by them and expresses joy on their progress on the path of spirit. These letters tend to show that these nobles, spiritually attached to the Mujaddid would surely have, in accordance with the instructions of their spiritual guide, tried to win over the king to Islam. They would have undoubtedly cooperated in this task with the other courtiers of Jahāngīr whom their Shaikh had been constantly imploring and urging for restoration of the Islamic character of the Mughal Empire.

Mujaddid's personal contribution

The discussion has so far related to the indirect efforts made by Shaikh Ahmad through the nobles and grandees of the royal court for bringing round the Emperor to mend his ways and make obeisance to the laws and customs of Islam. The letters written by Shaikh Ahmad in rapid succession to different grandees and in a language that could not have failed to arouse the religious consciousness of the addressees must have had the desired effect. All of them did try to bring about the desired transformation but the key role in this enterprise was played by Nawāb Saiyid Farīd Bukhārī.

The nobles and courtiers were, however, not fitted to give a colour to the disposition and mood of the Emperor necessary for a total break with his past. The state policies tend to revolve round the person of the rulers in the hereditary kingships. A change of heart on the part of the ruler or his coming to place reliance on any godly soul can sometimes make the impossible possible and quickly accomplish a thing for which years of toil and tears are required. Jahāngīr had no idea of the spiritual perfection of Shaikh Ahmad nor the latter had ever tried to visit the royal court or establish contact with the Emperor. There was apparently nothing to bring the two closer but Providence had willed it in a way that affords an eloquent commentary on the Quranic verse ; *But it may happen*

that ye hate a thing which is good for you.[1]

Influence of the Mujaddid on Jahāngīr

We have already referred to the detention of the Mujaddid in Gwālior Fort in the third chapter. After his release, he accompanied the royal camp for three and a half years.[2] During this period, the Shaikh had religious discourses with the Emperor who had already been impressed, first, by his steadfastness in refusing to perform the ceremonial prostration, and then, by his determination to remain in captivity rather than expressing regret to get out of the Fort. The Emperor would have been aware how the Shaikh's saintliness had won over hundreds of fellow convicts to Islam in the Gwālior Fort. He would have also witnessed his piety and selflessness, prayers and supplications and the depth and extensiveness of his knowledge. There is also no doubt that Jahāngīr was an intelligent man who had ample opportunity of forming his own estimate of the nobles, scholars, mystics and theologians ever since the days of his father and had thus developed a flair for appreciation of men and morals as possessed by few individuals. He would have surely come to the conclusion that the Shaikh was a man of different mettle from those he had come across either in the royal court or closets of the mendicants.

The following account, which unmistakably indicates Jahāngīr's feelings of thankfulness to God as well as his satisfaction, also shows the transformation of his mental attitude in the company of the Mujaddid. This incident becomes all the more significant if we also bear in mind that the Fort of Kāngra was not captured by one of the Muslim generals of

1. Q. II, 216
2. Shaikh Ahmad was released from the Gwālior Jail in Jamādus Thānī 1029/April 1620 and he left the royal camp in Dhīl-Hijja, 1032/November, 1623

Jahāngīr but by Rājā Bikramājīt.

> "On the 24th of the same month I went to see the fort of Kāngra, and gave an order that the Qāzī, the Chief Justice and other learned men of Islam should accompany me and carry out in the fort whatever was customary, according to the religion of Muhammad. Briefly, having traversed about one *kos*, I went up to the top of the fort, and by the grace of God, the call to prayer and the reading of the Khutba and the slaughter of a cow, which had not taken place from the commencement of the building of the fort till now, were carried out in my presence. I prostrated myself in thankfulness for this great gift, which no king had hoped to receive, and ordered a lofty mosque to be built inside the fort."[1]

This is an account given by an Emperor in the beginning of whose rule many mosques had been demolished and appropriated by non-Muslims without being called to account but the Muslims were put to death at Mathura by his order on the charge of having slaughtered a cow.[2]

This account is indicative of the marked change in the state policy towards Islam which gradually changed from indifference or even opposition to an earnest care and respect for Islamic rites and customs as a result of the continued effort made by the nobles and grandees, directly and indirectly, who were incessantly urged by the Mujaddid to get the Emperor interested in Islam. It was this campaign of reform and renewal which created the atmosphere which eventually enabled Shāhjahān to adopt an actively pro-Islamic policy.

Reign of Shāhjahān

Shāhjahān's (1000-1075/1592-1666) rule, known as the

1. The *Tūzuk-Jahāngīrī* (Memoirs of Jāhangīr, Tr. Alexander Rogers, edt. Henry Beveridge, (New Delhi, 1968), Vol. II. p. 223
2. *Ganj-i-Arshafi*, p. 1172, cited from *Aurangzeb and His Times.*

golden period of the Mughals, lasted for 31 years beginning from 1036/1628. The Mujaddid had died two years before Shāhjahān ascended the throne but the movement of reform and renewal touched off by him continued to bring about a gradual, though imperceptible, improvement in the administration of the country. There is no historical evidence to show that Shāhjahān had taken an oath of fealty to Shaikh Ahmad or his son Khwāja Muhammad M'asūm, but it is also an undisputed fact that he held the Shaikh in high esteem. When Jahāngīr had summoned the Mujaddid to his court, Shāhjahān had sent Afzal Khān and Muftī 'Abdur Rahmān, both of whom were affiliated to him, with certain juristic opinions and the message that the "ceremonial prostration to the kings was lawful and permitted by the jurists on certain conditions. If you could perform it on meeting the Emperor, I would see that no harm comes to you." Shaikh Ahmad had, however, rejected the plea saying that it was a leave allowed in special circumstances but the rule was that no prostration was admissible to anyone save God in any circumstances."[1]

Historians agree that Shāhjahān was kind and benevolent and held the *shari'ah* in reverence. He was a great builder, specially of magnificent mosques; his personal life was blameless, which he led according to the dictates of the *shari'ah*; and he used to place reliance on the advice of the scholars and the pious around him. His Prime Minister S'ad Ullah Khān 'Allāmī (d. 1066/1656) was a noted scholar and pedagogue.

Whatever the view one may take of the personal character of Shāhjahān, it can hardly be denied that there was a marked departure from the Akbar's policy of promoting eclectic pantheism. Shāhjahān's desire to maintain the strict tenets of Islam is apparent from his several measures, such as, abolition of ceremonial prostration before the king, restoration of the mosques which had been converted into temples, and liberation

1. A detailed account has already been given earlier in chapter III

of Muslim women forcibly taken into wedlock by the Hindus. "With the latitude of Akbar's religious beliefs and practices, and the looseness of Jahāngīr's court, he had no sympathy," writes Sir Richard Burn, "and his objects were primarily to restore the strict profession of Islam rather than to persecute believers in other religions." He further says, "Thus he soon abolished the ceremonial prostration before the throne which had been instituted by Akbar and maintained by Jahāngīr, and in its place prescribed forms which savoured less of divine worship. The ostentatious use of divine era instituted by Akbar ceased so far as the record of months on the coinage was concerned a few years after Shāhjahān's accession..... Inter-marriage between Hindus and Muslims which had been common in the Punjab and Kashmir, was forbidden in 1634."[1]

Several incidents of Shāhjahān's zeal for his faith have been preserved by the contemporary historians. "When the royal camp was at Gujarāt", writes the court historian, "the Saiyids and Shaikhs of the town petitioned to the Emperor stating that some of the Hindus had married Muslim women, and appropriated several mosques. Thereupon Shaikh Mahmūd Gujarātī was appointed to make enquiries, separate the Muslim wives from their Hindu husbands, and take possession of the mosques. He acted according to the order, and the mosques occupied by the Hindus were pulled down and new mosques erected in their place. Later, an order was sent throughout the Empire directing the same action to be taken in similar cases."[2]

Shāhjahān's personal conduct showed as much reverence for religion as his state policy exhibited his desire to restore the tenets of Islam in public affairs. Still, he was excessively fond of his first-born Dārā Shikoh who was impulsive and cosmopolitan by temperament and had little regard for Islam's

1. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 217
2. Mohammad Wāris: *Bādshāh Nāmāh*, Vol. II, p. 58 (Bibliotheca Indica series)

creed and practices in his political decisions. He not only wanted Dārā to succeed him to the throne but was at times harsh and unjust in his dealings with Aurangzeb who was by far the ablest and most learned amongst his sons.[1] The question of succession in the monarchical forms of government, decided by personal likings of the ruling prince and artful plottings of the contenders to the throne, seldom takes into account the uprightness of personal conduct and faithfulness to one's religion. This is perhaps the reason why a virtuous ruler is oftentimes found lending his support to a corrupt and degenerate wretch.

Prince Dārā Shikoh

It would not be fair to depend on the court historians of Aurangzeb's reign for condemning Dārā Shikoh as an apostate from Islam nor the war of succession between Dārā and his brothers could be conceived as a struggle between Islam and infidelity, nor yet was it a conflict of ideologies and philosophies. Dārā's own writings, however, confirm the charge of his contemporaries, both Muslims and non-Muslims, who allege that he had discarded the essential dogmas of Islam and wanted to renew Akbar's electicism. This mystic prince had unfortunately fallen under the spell of the sufis like Miān Mīr, Mullā Shāh and Sarmad. It did not take him long to claim that he was an *'Arif Kāmil*, a knower through God, and to declare that "the wealth of divine knowledge is not bestowed on every person, but it has been bestowed especially on me".[2] By the time he was in his late twenties, he had developed hatred towards dogma and orthodoxy: he wrote to an eminent mystic saint, Shāh Dilrubā, in a letter, "Esoteric Islam has ceased to influence the mind of this meekhearted and the real esoteric infidelity has shown its face

1. Zahīr Uddin Farūqī: *Aurangzeb and His Times*, see chapter I, War of Succession
2. Dārā Shikoh, *Risālā Haqnāmah*, Litho, Newal Kishore Press, p. 5

to him".[1] In his streak of egoism and self-commendation, Dārā often indulged in aphorisms and mystical utterances repugnant to Islamic beliefs and practices. He argued that distress or calamity made the prayer necessary for the immature, while an *'Arif Kāmil*, as he was, had no need of prayers. Accordingly, he had suspensed with the prayers and fasts enjoined by Islam.[2] Meanwhile, his studies of Sanskrit led him to Vedenta and Yoga philosophy, to Hindu rituals and mythology. Fascinated by mystical pantheism he wanted to renew Akbar's syncreticism. The Holy Qur'ān he found enigmatical, its meaning hidden and the Upanishads as the original revelation in which Quranic verses could be found in entirety.[3] Dārā kept the company of Brahmins, yogis and *sanyāsis* and regarded them as true masters of wisdom. As a contemporary historian has reported, "He considered their books.....the word of God, and employed himself in translating them.....More specifically, Dārā had taken up the Hindu name *Prabhu* (Lord) and inscribed it on the rings which he wore, he had given up the prayers, fasting and other obligations imposed by the law.....It became manifest that if Dārā Shikoh obtained the throne and established his power, the foundations of the faith would be in danger and the precepts of Islam would be changed for the rant of infidelity and Judaism."[4]

The Muslim chroniclers' accounts could be coloured by their prejudice, but there are also corroborative evidences left

1. Fourth letter to Shāh Dilrubā in *Fāiyyāz-ul-Qawānīn* cited by Bikramājit Hasrat in *Dārā Shikoh: Life and Works*, (Shanti Niketen, 1953), p. 65
2. Khafi Khān. *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, Vol. I, pp. 717, 725 (Bibliotheca Indica Series; Elliot and Dowson); Muhammad Kazim's *'Ālamgīr Nāmāh*), Vol. VII, p. 179
3. *Sirrul Asrār* (British Museum). In some Mss. the book bears the title of *Sirr-i-Akbar*. Also see *Majm'a-ul-Bahrain* by Dārā Shikoh, pp. 1, 18.
4. Mohammad Kāzim, *'Ālamgīr Nāmah*, Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VII, p. 179

by contemporary Hindu writers about the censurable beliefs and conduct of Dārā Shikoh. Sujān Singh writes in the *Khulāsat-ut-Tawārikh*, ".....Dārā Shikoh being inclined towards the religion of the Hindus, associates with Brahmins, yogis, and *sanniyāsis*, and regards them as his guides and protectors, and looks upon their Books, known as Veda, as ancient and revealed from God, and spends his precious time in translating them, and composing poems in Hindi; calls them *tasawwuf*, and, instead of the name of God, he has inscribed Hindi names which denote Reflection of God to Hindus, on diamond, ruby, and other stones, and puts them on as a charm and has discarded fasting and prayers and the ways of a Musalmān; has usurped power—determined to pay respect to His Majesty."[1]

Dārā's thoughts and behaviour, portending renewal of Akbar's religious eclecticism, which were never kept secret by the conceited prince, must have caused serious misgivings to the Indian Muslim society, and provided a God-send opportunity to the practical and astute Aurangzeb to take advantage of the situation. It is also quite reasonable that the Muslim scholars, right-minded sufis and their disciples, would have recoiled in horror at the thoughts and doings of Dārā for they had been a witness to the indignities heaped on Islam and the Muslims during Akbar's time. They would have been sympathetic or rather actively helped the Prince whom they knew to be virtuous, God fearing and the defender of orthodox faith.[2]

The final outcome of the war of succession is too well known to be recounted here. Aurangzeb ascended the throne in 1068/1659 and ruled over the country for half a century.

1. Sujan Singh, *Khulāsat-ut-Tawārikh*, p. 58 cited from *Aurangzeb and His Times*, p. 48
2. See for details Prof. Muhammd Aslam who has thrown light on the role played by the scholars and mystics in the victory of Aurangzeb in one of his essays included in the *Tārikhī Maqālāt*.

Muhyī-ud-dīn Aurangzeb 'Alamgīr

Aurangzeb had displayed a concern for the faith from the very beginning and held Shaikh Ahmad and his progeny in reverence. It is also reported that he had enlisted himself as a disciple of Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm.[1] There is also supportive evidence to show that Aurangzeb did not merely admire Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm but had accepted him as his spiritual guide. The Khwājā, on the other hand, looked affectionately upon Aurangzeb since his childhood and used to call him Shāhzāda Din Panāh (Protector-Prince of the Faith). In a letter written by Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn to his father, Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm, we find a reference to Aurangzeb's pre-occupation with mystical path of spirit. He writes:

> "The King is firmly attached to your eminence. Having traversed the stages of *latā'if sittah* and *sultān-ul-azkār*, he has attained the station of negation and affirmation. As he states, more often he does not feel even a streak of dubiety and if he does feel it at any time, it is only transitory. He is much pleased with it for he used to be perplexed earlier by the state of suspense and hesitation. He is thankful to God for this favour to him."[2]

Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm offered thanks to God for the spiritual perfection of the King in his reply to the above letter. His letter also shows that Aurangzeb had by that time attained a sufficiently higher stage known as *fanā-i-qalbī* or extinction of the heart, on the path of mysticism.[2]

Abul Fath writes in the *Ādāb-i-'Ālamgirī* that "soon after Aurangzeb's accession to the throne, Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm and his elder brother Khwājā Muhammad Sa'eed paid a visit to the royal court. Aurangzeb presented three hundred gold

1. *Maktūbāt Saifiyah*, No. 83 to Sūfī S'ad Ullah Afghānī
2. *Ibid.*, letter No. 2
2. *Maktubāt Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm*, No. 220

mohurs to them on that occasion.[1]

Professor Muhammad Aslam has also cited a number of other incidents mentioned in the *Mīrāt-ul-'A'ālam*[2] and the *Futūhāt 'Ālamgīrī*[3] which go to show that Aurangzeb was on very intimate terms[4] with the sons of Khwājā Muhammad

1. Abul Fath, *Ādāb-i-'Ālamgīrī*, India Office Library Manuscript, No. 317, folio-B, 431; Muhammad Kāzim, *Alamgīr Nāmāh*, (Calcutta, 1868) p. 493 (cited from *Tārīkhī Maqālāt* by Prof. Muhammad Aslam).
2. The *Mirāt ul-A'ālam* by Bakhtāwar Khān is a British Museum Manuscript on universal history and describes Aurangzeb's manners and habits.
3. *Futūhāt 'Ālamgīrī* by Ishwar Dās gives very useful information about Aurangzeb's rule (British Museum Manuscript No. 23884).
4. The letters of Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn to Aurangzeb, published under the title of *Maktūbāt-i-Saifiyah* clearly indicate that the latter was not merely regardful of Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn and other members of the Mujaddiyah family as the kings and nobles usually are to eminent scholars and mystics of their time, but took the Khwājā as his spiritual guide. In a letter addressed to Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm, Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn writes:

> "I have had lengthy sittings these days with the King; some of the intricate points mentioned in the letters came under discussion and the King patiently listened to my explanations (letter No. 3)."

In another letter written by Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm to Shaikh Muhammad Bāqar of Lahore, he writes:

> "On the Sunday night, which was the third of this month, the King dropped into my house and took whatever food was available at the time. The sitting with the King was sufficiently lengthy—we also remained silent for a time in a meditative state—, and I hope to see him undergoing the *tarīqah-i-'āliyah* (ritual of sublimity) as desired by the well-wishers (letter No. 142, pp. 168-69).

The intimate relationship between Aurangzeb and the Mujaddiyah family appears to have been too well-known for an eminent mystic Shaikh of the Chishtiyah Nizāmiyah order, Shāh Kalīm Ullah Jahānābādī (d. 1143/1730) instructed Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn of

(Continued on next page)

M'asūm who often used to call upon him. Aurangzeb also used to present costly gifts to them and he visited Sirhind several times to associate with Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm and his family members while on his way from Delhi to Lahore or back.

Muftī Ghulām Sarwar is on record in the *Khazīnat-ul-Asfia* that Aurangzeb repeatedly requested Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm to keep company with him but he always declined the offer, in accordance with the advice of his late father, and sent his son Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn to Delhi as his proxy. Two letters[1] included in the *Maktūbāt M'asūmiyah*, which are addressed to the Emperor, tend to show that Aurangzeb used to seek advice from Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm and also acted on it. In the next section we would show how Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn helped the king in his religious endeavours designed to make the *shar'iah* the law of the land. The collection of Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn's letters, known as the *Maktūbāt-i-Saifiyah*, includes eighteens letters[2] addressed to the king in which his attention has been drawn to the prevalent innovations that ought to be prohibited and the steps to be taken for propagation of the Holy Prophet's *sunnah* and practices of the true faith.

It is not possible to ascertain the religious motive for every action or decision taken by any king nor can they always be in accordance with the teachings of Islam. This was true only in the case of the first four right-guided caliphs and the Umayyad Caliph 'Umar b. 'Abdul 'Azīz who regarded the

(Continued from previous page)

Aurangābād, in one of his letters, to exercise caution in organising musical recitations since mystics of the Mujaddiyah family were with the King in his Deccan campaign. (Prof. Khalīq Ahmad Nizāmī, *Tarīkh Mashā'īkh Chisht*, pp. 418-19.)

1. *Maktūbāt M'asāumiyah* Nos. 221, 247
2. *Maktūbāt-i-Saifiyah*, Nos. 20, 22, 23, 26, 35, 39, 56, 57, 59, 60, 67, 72, 74, 76, 80, 161, 164 and 165.

caliphate as an extension of the prophetic assignment. The things changed with the passage of time as well as under the compulsion of social and political forces but, apart from it, we can never be sure of the reliability of accounts left by the historians. It would thus be difficult to bring in any verdict on the doings of the rulers of later times with any amount of certainty. Nevertheless, the reliable historical data available about Aurangzeb speaks volumes of his concord with the objectives of reformation and renovation set afloat by Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid Sirhindī and the active cooperation he extended to the virtuous efforts of the Shaikh's progeny in transforming the state and the society as instruments serving the cause of religion. Aurangzeb took courageous steps, for the first time in the history of India, in accordance with the ideas and ideal of the Mujaddid to rejuvenate the state and the society irrespective of the financial loss suffered by his government. How far these measures designed to reform the morals of the people and to enforce the provisions of the *shari'ah* were successful can be seen from the following remarks of the author of *Ma'āthir-i-Alamgīrī*.

> "The innovators, atheists, heretics who had deviated from the straight path of Islam, infidels, hypocrites and the spiritually indifferent who had spread all over India—were chastised and forced to give up their wicked usages, obey theologians and observe the fasts and prayers regularly."[1]

We need not give any detailed account of the personal character and conduct of Aurangzeb who was acclaimed by his contemporary historians as a believing, pious ruler "absolutely free from vice and even from the more innocent pleasure of the idle rich."[2]

Speaking of Aurangzeb's piety and simplicity Manucci says:

> "The king.....sleeps for three hours only, on

1. Muhammad Sāqi Musta'id Khān, *Ma'āsir-i-'Ālamgīrī*, p. 93
2. Jadunath Sircar, *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 318

awakening offers up his usual prayers which occupy an hour and a half.....Every year he goes into penitential retirement for forty days, during which he sleeps on the ground, he fasts, he gives alms.....Thus in twenty-four hours his rule is to eat once and sleep three hours.[1]....His clothes are plain, he wears few ornaments.....nothing but a small plume, or aigrette in the middle of his turban and a large precious stone in front. He wears no strings of pearls..... His coats are of a very moderately priced material, for each Qabā (gown) does not exceed ten rupees in cost."[2]

The last days of this *darvish* clad in the imperial purple have been thus described by the historians :

"In the fifty-first year of his rule, 1118/1707, he was smitten with fever for four days, but he performed all the five daily prayers with the congregation. He wrote a will giving directions about his last rites—I leave four and a half rupees out of my earnings by sewing caps which should be spent on the death shroud, while 805 rupees earned by copying the Qur'ān should be distributed to the poor and the needy—After morning prayers on Friday, 28th of Dhil Q'ada, fifty-first year of his kingship in 1118 A.H.,[3] he was engrossed in the recollection of God. A *pahar* of the day later the rosary fell silent as God answered his prayers."[4]

There was not a field of activity—political, social, fiscal and moral—in which Aurangzeb did not try to bring out improvements. Here we would mention some of his edicts which were issued with the object of ensuring deference due to the

1. Niccolo Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, (first three volumes translated by William Irvine, London, 1907; fourth volume translated by John Murray, London, 1908), Vol. II, p. 332
2. *Ibid.*, II, p. 342
3. 3rd March, 1707
4. *Ma'āsir-i-'Ālamgīri*, p. 519 (Will of Aurangzeb)

shari'ah and Islamic practices.

Describing the events pertaining to the second year of Aurangzeb's reign (1069/1659), Khafī Khān writes:

> "Since the reign of Emperor Akbar the official year of account and the years of the reign had been reckoned from the 1st Farwardi, when the sun enters Aries, to the end of Isfandār, and the year and its months were called Ilāhī; but as this resembled the system of the fire worshippers, the Emperor, in his zeal for upholding Islamic rule, directed that the year of the reign should be reckoned by the Arabic lunar year and months, and that in the revenue accounts also the lunar year should be preferred to the solar. The festival of the (solar) new year was entirely abolished..... (All) know that.....the recurrence of the four seasons, summer, winter, the rainy season of Hindustān, the autumn and spring harvests, the ripening of the corn and fruit of each season, the *tankhwāh* of the *jāgīrs*, and the money of the *mansabdārs*, are all dependent upon the solar reckoning, and cannot be regulated by the lunar; still his religious Majesty was unwilling that the *nauroz* and the year and months of the Magi should give their names to the anniversary of his accession."[1]

Khafi Khan goes on further to say:

> "To comfort the people and alleviate their distress, the Emperor gave order for the remission of the *rāhdārī* (toll) which was collected on every highway (*guzar*), frontier and ferry, and brought in large sums to the revenue. He also remitted the *pāndāri*, a ground or house cess, which was paid throughout the imperial dominions by every tradesman and dealer, from the butcher, the potter, and the green-grocer, to the draper, jeweller, and banker..... The

1. Khafī Khān, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, Vol. II, pp. 77-79 (Elliot and Dawson, Vol. VII, pp. 241-42)

tax on spirits, on gambling houses, on brothels, the fines, thanks-givings, and the fourth part of debts recovered by the help of magistrates from creditors. These and other imposts, nearly eighty in number, which brought in crores of rupees to the public treasury were all abolished throughout Hindustān."[1]

Soon after his second coronation anniversary Aurangzeb issued a number of ordinances for restoring the rules of Islam in the administration and bringing the lives of the people into closer accord with the moral teachings of the Qur'ān. Almost every historian of Aurangzeb's time reports the appointment of Mullā 'Ewaz Wajīh, an eminent Turānī scholar, as the censor, with the rank of the commander of one thousand horse. A party of *mansabdārs* and *ahadīs* was placed under him and the provincial governors were directed to assist Mullā 'Ewaz Wajīh in the work of moral reform of the people within their own jurisdictions.[2]

The annals for the years from the eleventh to the twenty-first year of Aurangzeb's regnal year include several regulations promulgated with the object of enforcing the rules of the *shar'iah*. Khafī Khān writes in the *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*.

> "The king of happy disposition strove earnestly from day to day to put in force the rules of the law, and to maintain the Divine commands and prohibitions The minstrels and singers of reputation in the service of the court were made ashamed of their occupation, and were advanced to the dignity of *mansabs*. Public proclamations were made prohibiting singing and dancing.....In the reigns of former kings, upto this year, the *jharoka-darshan* had been a regular institution. His religious Majesty looked upon this as among the forbidden and unlawful practices,

1. Khafī Khān, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, Vol. VII, p. 87 (Elliot & Dawson, p. 247).
2. *'Ālāmgīr Nāmāh*, pp. 390-97; *Mira'āt Ahmadi*, pp 263-4, *Storia*, ii, pp.5-7

so he left off sitting in the window, and forbade the assembling of the crowd beneath it."[1]

The Muslim rulers of India had come to place reliance on astrologers and horoscopists like the Hindu rājās of old; the astrologers were considered an integral part of the Mughal emperor's entourage. They decided all questions pertaining to the selection of the proper time for doing things which were considered to depend upon the selection of the proper astronomical movement. In the year 1087/1675, according to Khafī Khān, "Aurangzeb forbade all this. He abolished the custom of composing and reciting verses, of selecting the moment for doing things on the basis of astronomical calculations."[2] "They were also bound down to furnish securities for not drawing up almanacs."[3]

The administration of justice had been the preserve of civil administrators and military officers during the Mughal period. "Aurangzeb established the Qāzī so firmly", writes Khafī Khān, "in the affairs of the state and with reference to the general principles as well as the details of administration, that the leading and responsible officers of the empire began to regard them with envy and jealousy."[4]

As it was the great object of Aurangzeb that all Muslims should follow the principles of religion as expounded by the most competent jurists and the law officers should not feel difficulty in administering the canonical laws, he took the initiative of getting a digest of Muslim Law compiled by competent

1. Khafī Khān, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, Vol. II, p. 211 ff. (Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VII, pp. 283-84)
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 215, (A. J. Syed Bombay, 1977, p. 247)
3. Muhammad. Sāqī Musta'id Khān, *Ma'āsir-i-'Ālamgīrī*, pp. 75, 81, *Ruqa'āt 'Ālamgīrī*, No. 78
4. Khafī Khān, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, p. 216 (A. J. Syed, p. 248); Jadunath Sircar, *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, p. 74; Zahir-ud-din Farūqī, *Aurangzeb and His Times*, pp. 559-62

scholars. He appointed a Board of experts to compile a standard canon in order to provide an easy and available means of ascertaining the proper and authoritative legal opinion alongwith the sources from which these precedents were derived. The chief editor of the digest, appointed in the very beginning of Aurangzeb's rule, was Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn of Burhānpūr who was assisted in the task by a number of eminent scholars of Hanafite persuation.[1] This digest known as the *Fatāwah-i-'Ālamgīrī* in India and the *Fatāwah-i-Hindiyah* in Egypt, Syria and Turkey is still regarded as a work of outstanding merit and importance. It was completed in six volumes at a cost of more than rupees two lacs.[2]

An act of greater courage was the proclamation made by Aurangzeb that he was prepared to meet all the *shara'i* and civil claims against him. Reporting the events pertaining to the period between eleventh and the twenty-first regnal year Khafi Khān says: "In this year owing to his concern for righteousness and justice, Aurangzeb ordered a proclamation to be issued at the court and the cities, 'Every one, who had any civil or *shara'i* claim against the Emperor, was to present himself before the *vakil* of Emperor, and obtain his claim after proving his case.' Aurangzeb also ordered a *vakil-i-shara'i* to be appointed on behalf of the Emperor in the court and each of the territories far and near in order to deal with the claims of the people who were unable to approach the Emperor themselves."[3]

It had long been customary with those attending the Mughal Court to salute the Emperor by lowering their heads and touching it with the hands several times. These practices, although

1. Hakīm Saiyid Abdul Ha'i has given the names of twenty scholars selected for the compilation of the *Fatāwah (As-Thaqāfat-il-Islāmiyah fil Hind*, Damascus, pp. 110-111).
2. Bhaktāwar Khān, *Mirāt-i-'Ālam* (Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VII, pp.159-160)
3. Khafi Khān, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, Vol. II, p.248 (A.J. Syed, p. 271)

against the precepts of the *shari'ah*, had been accepted no less by the learned and the mystics than the nobles and grandees of the state. It has been reported by the historians that "during the same period an order was issued that when Musalmāns met the king they were to greet him with the *salām* prescribed by the *shari'ah* and not to raise their hands to their heads like infidels; the officers were also to behave in the same way towards persons of distinction as well as the generality of the people."[1]

The steps taken by Aurangzeb to enforce the rules of the *shari'ah* and the orders and prohibitions of God earned him the title of "Muhyi-ud-dīn", the vivifier of faith, from the people desirous to see Islam strong and vigorous in India. Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbāl, who had a deep insight into the conflicting features of the ancient Indian religious thought and philosophy and the ideas and ideals of Islam as well as the vital role of the latter in shaping the future of the country, deemed Aurangzeb to be one of the protectors of true faith in India. The writer of these lines had met the Poet of East at his residence on 22nd November, 1937 and recorded in his reminiscence of the meeting that:

> "Coming to the topic of Islamic revival and renovation in India, the 'Allāma paid glowing tributes to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, Shāh Walīullah, and Emperor Muhyi-ud-dīn Aurangzeb and remarked that but for these great men and their Herculean efforts, Islam would have been assimilated in India by the Hindu culture and philosophy."[2]

Iqbāl has also summed up his feelings of admiration and gratitude to the great Emperor in these lines included in the

1. Khafi Khān, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, Vol. II, p.248 (A.J. Sayed. p.271), p. 271; Muhammad Sāqi Musta'id Khān, *Maāsir i-Ālamgirī*, p.98
2. For a detailed discussion of Aurangzeb's religious reforms see Jadunath Sarkar's *Aurangzeb*, Vol. III and *Aurangzeb* by Stanley Lane-Poole.

Ramūz-i-Bekhudī.

'Ālamgīr, the king of heavenly abode, the glory of Timurid lineage,
To him is due the respect paid to Muslims and to the Prophet's law, the homage.

He was our last shot in the battle of religion and misbelief,
When Dārā came forth in the cast of Akbar's seed of disbelief.

Hearts had ceased to be radiant within the breasts and the *millat* was in despair,
Thence God picked up 'Ālamgīr, the mendicant with a trusty sabre.

To revive the faith and renew conviction, he was charged,
His luminous sword illumined our company and the seat of *kufr* was scorched.

Unable to fathom his wisdon, the blockheads took to prattle,
Enamoured of *tauḥīd*, he was like Ibrāhīm in the idol-temple.

Exalted among the kings, from his grave his mendicity is visible.

The ideas and ideals of the Mujaddid gradually took root within the country through the efforts of his purehearted spiritual successors, specially Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm and Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī, until, by the twelfth century, this country became a lighthouse of spiritual and intellectual enlightenment amidst the gloom encompassing the world of Islam. A network of hospices run by mystics belonging to the Mujaddidyah order came into existence which attracted people from the lands, far and near, for obtaining spiritual guidance as well as instruction in the *ḥadīth* and other branches of Islamic learning.

CHAPTER IX

NOTABLE ADVERSARIES OF SHAIKH AHMAD

The character and thought of Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid Sirhindi discussed earlier bring out his achievements which are definitely great and outstanding, but this appraisal would remain incomplete if a mention is not made of his adversaries who started opposing him in his own lifetime. Certain writings of the Mujaddid in his letters and other works, explaining higher reaches of the spiritual realm, did give rise to discordant notes against him.

The lasting fame and popularity achieved by the Mujaddid during his lifetime raised his prestige outside the country no less than the recognition accorded to him in the intellectual and ruling circles of India. Nevertheless, some of his teachings were so unfamiliar to the people in general that even the learned among them found it hard to accept them. They were shocked by his views which were against the accepted thought and inherited custom of the community. This reaction was not unusual : all those

who are endowed with a nimble mind and vital impulse have to go beyond the current norms of thought and practice with the result that they find themselves at odds with their contemporaries. The Mujaddid had been preaching against the so-called virtuous innovations, respectful prostration to the mystic guides, musical recitation normally accepted as a means of inducing ecstasy, verbal repetition of the *niyat* (intention) before the prayers, congregational prayers of *tahajjud*, celebrations in connection with the prophet's birthday, infallibility of intuitive insights and spiritual knowledge of the mystics as against the legal pronouncements of the celebrated jurists and similar other practices in vogue among almost all the sufi orders of his day which were then employed for drawing out the deepest spiritual emotions. And, to crown it all, he had the courage to criticise the Shaikh Akbar and his doctrine of Unity of Being which was then accepted as the acme of spiritual perfection and the highest achievement of gnostic intuition. He went even a step further and presented his own finding —the doctrine of *Wahdat-us-shuhūd*—as a parallel mystical experience to that of Shaikh Akbar. It would have really been surprising—an event unheard of in the history of revivalist movements or even arts and literature—if no dissenting voice had been raised towards the end of his life span or immediately after his death.

The opposition to the Mujaddid can be classified under two broad headings: one of it was caused either by misunderstanding or deliberate misrepresentation of his teachings and it vanished as soon as the misapprehension was removed or the false construction put on his ideas was detected. The second type of antagonism was the product of a contrary belief or thought or else a personal antipathy to him.

The friction between the Mujaddid and Shaikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dihlawī (d. 1052/1642), a sincere and pious scholar, falls under the first category. He was also one of the spiritual successors of Khwājā Bāqī Billāh and thus allied to the Mujaddid, but he expressed surprise and resentment on

certain views and statements of the Mujaddid and came out with them in one of his letters addressed to the latter.[1] The views, attributed to the Mujaddid in the letter of Shaikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dihlawī, have been found to be incorrect or distorted by those who have studied it at length. Actually this was a personal letter written by Shaikh 'Abdul Haq to a colleague and it was not included by him in the compilation of his epistles known as the *Al-Maktūbāt wal-Rasā'il*. According to Mīrzā Mazhar Jānjānān Shaikh 'Abdul Haq had even directed his successors to destroy this letter.

The underlying idea in the letter of Shaikh 'Abdul Haq was that certain statements of the Mujaddid were contemptuous of the great precursors who were unanimously held in esteem by the entire community. This letter has, however, been examined more than once and the contention of Shaikh 'Abdul Haq has been refuted by several scholars. The letters of the Mujaddid as well as his life-long endeavours give a lie to the charge against him. An important reason for Shaikh 'Abdul Haq's opposition to Shaikh Ahmad was his unbounded devotion and love for Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir Jīlānī who has been, in a unique way, the inspirer of millions. Shaikh 'Abdul Haq shared the ardent affection evoked by the lovesome spirituality of Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir in the hearts of vast numbers and thus he could not countenance what he considered as the assertion of anybody's superiority over Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir. This point has also been extensively dealt with by several writers in a satisfactory manner.

1. Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizāmī has given the full text of this letter in his "*Hayāt Shaikh 'Abdul Haq*" (pp. 312-344). Several brochures have since been written to confute the charges levelled by Shaikh 'Abdul Haq by persons like Shaikh Badr-ud-dīn Sirhindi, Shaikh Muhammad Yahyā (youngest son of Shaikh Ahmad), Shaikh Muhammad Farrukh, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz Muhaddith Dihlawī, Qazi Thanā Ullah Pānīpatī and Shaikh Ghulām 'Alī Dihlawī. A larger volume consisting of 336 pages was written by Vakīl Ahmad of Sikandarpūr under the title of the *Hadiyah-i-Mujaddidiyah*.

It is not necessary to re-examine Mujaddid's letter in question or the different issues that arise from it for one can go throngh the writings on the subject, some oi which have been mentioned earlier. These studies prove, beyond any shadow of doubt, that most of the statements attributed to the Mujaddid were deliberate perversions or, at best, misconstructions on his sententious expressions. It is rather surprising how Shaikh 'Abdul Haq allowed himself to accept such reports and quoted them in his letter. Shāh Ghulām 'Alī Dihlawī who is typically solemn and soberminded has after citing such concocted passages expressed his surprise in these words: "God forbid! What a monstrous lie and fake material! None of the Mujaddid's letters include these passages. May Allah forgive the Shaikh."

Since, however, Shaikh 'Abdul Haq's criticism of the Mujaddid was motivated by his sincerity and zeal for religion, he lost no time in making amends as soon as his misunderstanding was removed. His subsequent letters to the Mujaddid as well as other contemporary mystics bespeak of his admiration and high regard for the latter.[1] In one of his letters written after his retraction from the criticism against the Mujaddid, Shaikh 'Abdul Haq wrote to Khwājā Hosām-ud-dīn of Delhi.

> "May Allah keep you well and allow your sincere disciples to enjoy your gracious patronage. The reason for not being able to ascertain about your health during the last two or three days was either because of my sluggishness, a common human weakness, or my assumption that you would be alright in a few days. I hope that you would now let me know about your health.
>
> "I am looking forward to the happy tidings from

1. It is interesting to see how a modern scholar who has treated Shaikh Abdul Haq's letter criticising Shaikh Ahmad at some length, dismisses the reproachment between the two with a skeptical note. See pp.87-90 of Friedman's *Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindī*.

Shaikh Ahmad. I hope that the invocations of his adorers would be answered by God, and they would surely be efficacious. This poorling is nowadays feeling a close spiritual affinity with him; nothing of human dispositions and mental attitudes stand in-between us. I do not know why it is so. But apart from it, the right and proper course as well as the way dictated by prudence is that one should not bear any ill-will against such a venerable person. I find my own heart so very inclined towards him that it is difficult to express my attachment to him in words. God alone is capable of inclining the hearts and changing dispositions. Those who cannot see beyond the external appearances would not believe it, but I myself do not know what has happened to me and how it has come about. God knows best the truth of the matter."[1]

We may now turn to an Arab scholar of Hijāz, Shaikh Hasan al-Ujaimī,[2] who respresents the second group of Shaikh Ahmad's opponents. In the introduction of his book entitled

1. Shāh Naym Ullah of Bahraich, *Bashārāt-i-Mazharlya*, Nadwatul 'Ulamā Library Manuscript No. *Tarikh* (33535) 1591. It was written in 1281/1864.
2. He was a teacher of *hadith* in Medina, and a renowned Hanafite theologian of his time. He was the teacher of Shaikh Abū Tāhir Kurdī, under whom Shāh Waliullah had studied *hadith*. Shāh Waliullah introduces him in the *Anfās-ul-'Ārafin* as a teacher of *hadith* and a man of encyclopedic knowledge. He was a fluent speaker with good memory and a close associate of Shaikh 'Isā al-Maghribī but was also friends with Shaikh Ahmad Qashāshī, Shaikh Muhammad bin 'Alā Bāblī and Shaikh Zainal 'Abidīn b. 'Abdul Qādir Tabarī, a Shāf'ite jurist. He had also been associated with the mystics like Shāh Ni'amat Ullah Qādirī and practised the methods employed to attain spiritual concentration. His favourite student was Shaikh Abū Tāhir Kurdī, the teacher of Shāh Walī Ullah. In his old age he had given up his residence at Mecca and led a secluded life at Tā'if where he died in 1113/1701. He was buried near the tomb of 'Abdullah b. 'Abbās. (*Anfās-ul-'Ārifin*, pp. 186-7). In the *Al-'Ālām*, Khair-ud-dīn al-Zarkalī

(Continued on next page)

As-Sārim al-Hindī fī Jawāb-i-Sawāl 'an Kalamāt-i-Sirhindī,[1] it has been stated that a juristic opinion has been sought from the scholars of Mecca and Medina in regard to certain heterodox statements made by Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī in his letters. "The enquirers have asked," he writes, "to expound the view of the *shari'ah* about any one making such unsound statements, or giving tongue to them, or entertaining a belief in them, or else preaching them." Thereafter, the author says, "my revered teacher Shaikh Mullā Ibrāhīm b. Hasan Kaurānī directed me to write a rejoinder giving legal opinions on the subject and also to mention the opinions expressed on the subject by other scholars of the two holy cities." Shaikh Hasan has also copied the legal opinions of his teachers, Mullā Ibrāhīm Kaurānī of Medina and Saiyid Jamāl-ud-dīn Muhammad b. 'Abd ur-Rasūl al-Barzanjī in his book.

It would be of interest to know something about the two scholars quoted by Shaikh Hasan. The former, that is, Mullā Ibrahīm Kaurānī of Medina finds a mention in the *Anfās-ul-'Ārifīn* of Shāh Walīullah. He was father of Shaikh Abū Tāhir Kurdī, the scholar under whom Shāh Walīullah studied *hadīth*. He had accused an eminent scholar and mystic of his time, Shaikh Yahyā Shawī, of having anthropomorphic view of God for which he was turned out of his court by a minister

(Continued from previous page)

has stated that he was a non-Arab whose father's name was 'Alī b. Yahyā, and his patronymic name was Abu'l Baqā. The year of his birth is given in it as 1049/1639. (*Al 'Ālam*, Vol. II, p. 223).

1. Arabic manuscript No. 2753, Khudā Bakhsh library, Bankīpūr, Patna. The manuscript is a copy from the author's own dissertation by Shaikh Sulaimān Jīwā. Another incomplete manuscript of it (included in the *Qadh-us-Zand*, No. 224) is to be found in the Āsafia Library under the title of *Al-'Asb al-Hindī* but the name of the book has not been given by the copyist. Two other books confuting Shaikh Ahmad, present in the Āsafia Library, are by Muhammad al-Barzanji (Mss. No. 223 and 224 under the *Kalām* section).

of the Turkish Empire. The incident is but an example of his being rash and short-tempered. Saiyid Muhammad al-Barzanjī[1], the second jurist cited by Shaikh Hasan in his support, is stated to be sulky by Shāh Walīullah.

It is also noteworthy that in a *fatwā* the legal position stated in the light of Islamic law by a jurisconsult is always based on facts narrated by an inquirer. The jurists are not judges, nor do they have time and resources to record the evidences or make personal enquiries before giving their opinions. It is also not incumbent on them to find out whether the oral or written statements attributed to a certain person and submitted to them for legal opinion are correct or not. Thus, there is every reason to believe that the above-mentioned jurisconsults would not have gone through the *Maktūbāt* of Shaikh Ahmad. It would have not been possible for them to spare some of their time spent in studies and teaching, to make enquiries about the beliefs and statements attributed to Shaikh Ahmad. There was no scholar having first-hand information about Shaikh Ahmad in Mecca or Medina in those days.

As for the mental grasp, truthfulness and conscientiousness of the inquirer seeking juristic opinion about Shaikh Ahmad is concerned, only one example is enough to illustrate his ignorance and improbity. The observation of Shaikh Ahmad about the essence of the K'aba affirmed by him as divulging spiritual secrets, has been interpreted by the inquirer as his denial to recognise its present structure as the sacred mosque which amounted to infidelity. He says in his presentment that one of his unsound utterances is the denial of the present, well-

1. Muhammad b. 'Abdur Rasūl al-Barzanjī was born in 1040/1630 and died in 1103/1691. He belonged to Shehrzor but later on settled down in Medina. He wrote a book on Ibn 'Arabī, known as the *Hall-i-Mushkilāt Ibn 'Arabi*, and another to refute Shaikh Ahmad under the title of the *Qadh-us-Zand*. For details *see* Shaikh 'Abdullah Murād Abul Khair's *Al Mukhtasar min Kitāb Nasr an-Nūr Waz-Zahr*.

known edifice of K'aba as the sacred mosque.

This assertion can now be compared with the fascination and zeal expressed by Shaikh Ahmad for paying a visit to the holy mosque written in a letter to Shaikh Tāj-ud-dīn of Sanbhal just after the latter's return from the pilgrimage.

> "Just as the K'aba is, in the estimation of this humble self, the object of prostration for all forms and bodies created by God (whether they be human beings or angels), its essence is also the sanctorum of divine service for the essences of all forms and bodies. Its reality surpasses all realities and its perfection predominates over all the realities of other things. It is like an intervening stage between the realities of the world and the celestial realities."[1]

The instance cited here fully illustrates the worth and soundness of the *fatawā* based on linguistically strained or even wilfully misrepresented writings of Shaikh Ahmad. Still, the jurists who declared Shaikh Ahmad to be an infidel also said that:

> "However, it is not improbable that God might have bestowed His favour on the believer in these doctrines and the scriber of these writings, and he might have died as a true believer. This is what so often happens to His bondsmen: for, thus He demonstrates His mercy on several occasions. One of the grounds supporting this assumption is that some of his progeny who came for pilgrimage to the holy cities exprssed their desire to qualify for the academic degree in *hadīth*, and they told that their spiritual way consisted of following the *sunnah* of the Prophet and walking in his footsteps. They obtained the certificates of proficiency from the scholars of *hadīth* like Imām Zainul 'Abidīn Tabarī, and so highly satisfied and pleased was our Shaikh 'Isā Muhammad b. al-Maghribī J'afrī with them that he got himself initiated

1. *Maktūbāt*, Vol. I, No.263

in the Naqshbandiyah order with a view to receiving the blessings of venerated mystics among the ancestors of the latter."[1]

The author's solicitude for truthfulness is as much apparent from this quotation as it shows that his legal statements were based on distorted facts presented to him. It also divulges the diffidence of the jurisconsult in pronouncing an opinion hostile to Shaikh Ahmad, which, ultimately, had to be amended because of the noble behaviour and spiritual attainments of Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm as later on witnessed by him in the two holy cities. In fact, one of the respected scholars of the place, Shaikh 'Isa al-Maghribī took the oath of fealty on the hands of Khwājā M'asūm and was initiated in the Naqshbandiyah order. Shah Walīullah writes about Shaikh 'Isa al-Maghribī in the *Anfās ul-'Ārifin* :

> "In all respects he was a well-read scholar and teacher of great many theologians of the two holy cities. He was a colossus of knowledge pertaining to *hadīth* and *qirāt*. Saiyid Umar Bā Hasan used to say that if anybody wanted to see a saint, he ought to meet him."[2]

Shortly thereafter a scholar belonging to the Mujaddidyah order, Muhammad Beg al-Uzbeki went to Hijāz from India. He wrote *'Atiyāt al-Wahhāb al-Fāsalah bayna al-Khatā' wa al-Sawāb* to defend Shaikh Ahmad in which he demonstrated that the condemnation of Shaikh Ahmad was based on faulty translations and wilful misinterpretation of his writings. He cited several examples of such misrenderings with the result that a number of scholars in Arabia abandoned their erroneous notions and wrote books in the defence of Shaikh Ahmad. One of those who supported Muhammad Beg was Hasan b. Muhammad Murād Ullah al-Tūnisī al-Makkī whose *'Al-'Arf al-Nadī fī Nusrat-al-Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī* brings out the unreliable

1. Mss. *Al-Sarim al-Hindī*, p.2
2. *Anfās al-'Ārifin*, p. 183

testimony of wrong and misleading translations on which the campaign against Shaikh Ahmad was based by his detractors. Ahmad al-Yashīshī al-Misrī al-Azhari expressed his conviction that the Mujaddid had been condemned by certain scholars owing to their insufficient knowledge to understand the mystic terms used by the Shaikh or an erroneous conception of his thought. Muhammad Beg even defended Shaikh Ahmad in debates with the scholars of Hijāz which went a long way in clearing the mist of misunderstanding against the Mujaddid spread by al-Barzanjī with the result that he had ultimately to write *An-Nāshirah al-Nājirah lil-Firqah al-Fājirah* in which he speaks of Muhammad Beg with scorn and contempt.

In India the *Ma'ārij ul-Wilāyāh*[1] by Shaikh 'Abdullah Khesgī Qusurī (1043-1106/1633-1695) is a representative document showing the trend of thought among the sections not favourably inclined to the Mujaddid. Khesgī who was also known by the name of 'Abdī[1], was a prolific writer, having several works to his credit, and a theologian allied to the Chishtiyah order. He was strongly inclined to the doctrine of Unity of Being. Khesgī's teachers and mystic guides were mostly those who were opposed to the Mujaddid and had already signed the *fatwā* condemning him as a non-conformist. Some of them like Shaikh Ni'amat Ullah of Lahore and Qāzi Nūr ud-dīn, the Qāzī of Qusūr, seem to be unduly impressed by the *Qadh-us-Zand* whose author was then staying at Aurangābad.[2] Khesgī wrote *Ma'ārij ul Wilāyah* in the same city in 1096/1688 by making use of another contemporary but apparently anonymous work entitled *Kāsir ul-Mukhālifin*, which had been written to confute Shaikh Ahmad and his followers.

1. The author has seen a manuscript of the book in the personal library of Prof. Khalīq Ahmad Nizāmī. Another copy of the book is stated to be extant in Lahore.
2. For details see *Ahwāl-o-Āthār 'Abdullah Khesgī Kasurī* by Muhammad Iqbāl Mujaddidī. The book has been published by the Dār-al-Mu'arrikhin, Lahore.

Khesgī's *Ma'ārij ul-Wilāyah* evinces little scholarship and coherent thought as it would be seen by the few extracts of the book given here. Amongst the things considered objectionable by him, one is that the Mujaddid did not consider it necessary to repeat the words of *niyat* or intention before offering a prayer. He writes:

> "When he stood up for prayer, often he contemplated the *niyat* in his mind without repeating the formula, and claimed that it was the custom of the holy Prophet. He claimed that intention was a settling of purpose in the heart rather than something to be repeated by the tongue."

How deeply had Khesgī studied the *Maktūbāt* and what sense of responsibility he exhibited in attributing ideas and statements to the Mujaddid can be seen from the following extract taken from the *Ma'ārij ul-Wilāyah:*

> "Among the mystics of old those giving faith to the Unity of Being, such as Husain Mansūr, Shaikh Muhyi-ud-dīn Ibn 'Arabī and others, are regarded by him as agnostics and disbelievers. He has, on several occasions, denounced Muhyi-ud-dīn Ibn 'Arabī as an apostate, attributed the beliefs of the M'utazilah to him, yet, he has also listed him amongst the elects of God in the *Maktūbāt* compiled in three volumes."

Nowithstanding his criticism of the Mujaddid, Khesgī also pays tribute to him for his piety and spiritual attainments. He writes;

> "(Hazrat Khwājā Bāqī Billāh) had given him leave to guide the seekers of truth whereby he imparted instruction in divinity to those who sought guidance from him; led the people to the way of God; instructed them to follow the commandments of the *shari'ah;* denounced those who did not live up to the demands of the law of Islam; and was pleased with those who walked on the path shown by the *shari'ah.*"

Khesgi appears, at several places in his writtings, to be

favourably inclined to the Mujaddid and even defends him by contradicting the constructions put upon the Mujaddid's writings by his opponents. He reproduces a number of passages from the *Maktūbāt* held objectionable by the adversaries of the Mujaddid and then goes on to say:

> "It is, however, not at all necessary that these passages should be deemed to express the external *(zāhir)* sense of the words; if he intented, as already explained earlier, to convey some internal *(bātin)* significance.....he should neither be blamed nor held up to reprobation."

But the surrounding influence and the common talk he had swallowed soon make him to sing a different tune.

> "Nonetheless, the fact of the matter is that any pronouncement which can be construed as disrespectful to the holy Prophet can never be deemed to be free from blame or guilt."

One of the reasons for attaching undue importance to the *Ma'ārij ul-Wilāyah* and its publicity is that the book is supposed to preserve the text of a decree of Shaikh-ul-Islam[1] sent to Hidāyat Ullah, the *Qādī* of Aurangābād, on the direction of Aurangzeb. This decree, claimed to have been sealed by Shaikh-ul-Islām and issued on Shawwāl 27, 1090/December 1, 1679, directed the *qādī* to curb the ideas apparently opposed to the views of *ahl al-sunnah wal jama'āh* which were reported to be contained in the *Maktūbāt*, and to check their publication among the people.

The decree has been given undue importance in certain

1. Son of Qāzī 'Abdul Wahhāb was appointed as Shaikh ul-Islām by Aurangzeb in the year 1086/1675. In 1094/1686 the Shaikh resigned his exalted office and proceeded to Arabia for performing the pilgrimage. Aurangzeb exerted pressures on him to resume the office once again but the Shaikh did not accept his offer. Khafī Khān speaks of his piety and virtue in the *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb* in his narration of the events from the eleventh to the twenty-first regnal year.

modern dissertations as if it were a discovery of unusual significance which demolishes the whole edifice of the devotional attitude of Aurangzeb to the Mujaddid and his spiritual affiliation with the Mujaddid's descendants. One may refer to a recent work, the *Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindī* by a Jewish orientalist of Germany, Yohanan Friedmann, by way of example, who speaks of irrefutable historical authenticity of this document merely because (1) *Ma'ārij al-Wilāyah* was written in Aurangābād, the city to which the decree is claimed to have been despatched, (2) references to the decree are found in two more contemporary works and (3) the non-existence of any writing by a partisan of the Mujaddid rejecting it as a forged document. The two additional contemporary works cited in support, which make a reference to the document are the *Qadh-us-Zand* and the *An-Nāshirah al-Nājirah*, which were written by Muhammad b. 'Abdur-Rasūl al-Barzanjī. The first of two works, *Qadh-us-Zand wa Fadah al-Rand fi Radd Jihālat Ahl al-Sirhind* is an Arabic work completed on Rajab 13, 1093 (July 20, 1682), according to Friedmann. As Friedmann says the book was written to answer the *istiftā* (questionnaire) sent by the 'Qādī of India' styled as *qādī al-qudāt bid-dayār al-hindiyah* who was probably the same person referred to in the decree as Shaikh-ul-Islām. It is also claimed in the *Qadh-us-Zand* that the enquirer sent the questions for legal opinion upon the instructions of the Emperor. Were it so, Al-Barzanji would have been in direct contact with the person issuing the said decree, yet he fails to give its text although he reproduces all the other questions said to have been referred to the scholars of Mecca and Medina for juristic opinion. *As-Sārim al-Hindi* was also allegedly written by Shaikh Hasan Ujaimi in response to the *istiftā'* from Indian scholars but it spoke neither of the *qādī al-qudāt* nor of any decree issued by him. This leads to one conclusion only and it is that either the *istiftā'* was not sent by the *qadī* of India but by somebody else in his name or that no text of the decree existed by that time which would have

surely been sent along with the *istifta'* as a weighty document in support of the alleged claims against the Mujaddid. The other book *an-Nāshirah al-Nājirah lil-Firqah al-Fājirah* was completed by al-Barzanjī on Muharram 7, 1095/December 26, 1683, that is, two years after the first one was written to counter the pro-Mujaddid campaign launched in Hijāz. In this book, too, he just mentions the existence of the said decree. Incidently, this reduces Friedmann's two contemporary authorities to one only since both were written by the same author. However, against this solitary witness supporting Khesgī, none of the historians of Aurangzeb's time make any reference to the decree of the highest religious and judicial authority of the country although they report such trivial matters as funeral procession of music *(rāg)* taken out by the musicians and prohibition of the *t'aziā* procession following an altercation between two parties at Burhānpūr[1]. The decree in question does not also find a place in the published and unpublished collections of Aurangzeb's edicts, nor Friedmann has given any reason for this omission in the meticulously recorded annals of the time. On the other hand, Friedmann brushes aside the voluminous evidence of intimate relationship between Aurangzeb and the descendents of the Mujaddid just by a casual remark that the whole affair is a matter of controversy.

The so-called decree issued by the *qādī* of India begins with the words, "It has reached this august and holy location that some passages in the *Maktūbāt* of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī are apparently opposed to the views of *ahl-al-sunnah wal-jamā'at.*" Unlike his predecessors, Aurangzeb was widely read and an accurate scholar who kept up his love of books to his dying day. His extensive correspondence proves his mastery of Arabic and Persian literature, both secular and sacred. His interest in mystical discipline and association with the saintly men of God of his time are facts too well-known to every historian of

1. *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, pp. 213-14

the Mughal period. It would, therfore, be unreasonable to suppose that Aurangzeb was not conversant with the writings of the Mujaddid which had been deliberated upon by a large number of scholars of India and the holy cities ever since they had been penned by the Mujaddid, nor did he care to go through the book adversely reported to him despite his deep interest in all matters pertaining to religion. It is equally fallacious to suppose that Aurangzeb would have given orders to curb its contents just on hearsay reports. In fact, had any such report been received by Aurangzeb, the religious aspect of the matter could never have escaped his notice for there was hardly any one more competent than he to bring in a verdict on the falseness or otherwise of the contents of the *Maktūbāt*. In any case the order would have never been issued on the basis of reports reaching 'his august and holy location'; it would have rather been his own judgement to curb the publication of the *Maktūbāt* throughout his kingdom than in Aurangābād only. After a similar incident of local nature already referred to earlier, Aurangzeb had issued orders to all the *subās* prohibiting the manufacture and taking out of the *t'aziā* (of Imām Husain) instead of issuing a prohibitory order for Burhānpūr only.

Even if we assume that the decree in question is authentic, its importance has evidently been overestimated to strain the truth. The primary business of a king, even if he were religious-minded like Aurangzeb, would be to see that the people did not fall into polemical wranglings and mental dissention. Thus, if any order was in fact given by Aurangzeb for curbing the publication of intricate mystical thought contained in the *Maktūbāt* among the illiterate masses of Aurangābād, which had then become a centre of anti-Mujaddid activities, it would have been of the nature of instructions by many a mystic guide upholding the doctrine of *Wahdat ul-wujūd* but asking their disciples not to go through the works of Ibn 'Arabī. In other words, even if this decree were accepted as authentic, it would not be helpful

in drawing the inference that Aurangzeb disagreed with the Mujaddid's forceful pleadings for enforcing the *shari'ah* as the law of the land. For this was Aurangzeb's accepted policy and his life-long endeavour as unmistakably demonstrated by the deliberate steps taken by him to nullify the religious eclecticism of Akbar, and the reaffirmation of the distinct and unique character of Islamic thought and conduct—all these were completely in accord with the teachings of Mujaddid and his virtuous descendants who were in close contact with him.

Be that as it may, the popular opposition stirred up by rivals of the Mujaddid after his death, in order to condemn and contradict the mystical thoughts contained in the *Maktūbāt*, died away in the first quarter of the twelfth century A.H. although it was initially supported by a number of scholars and jurists. The traces of these wranglings can now be seen only on the pages of historical writings, some of which are still unpublished, destined to be preserved in the archives. On the other hand a number of cloisters of Mujaddidyah order were set up by that time from India to Turkistān. The scholars and mystics allied to the Mujaddid's order propagated his thought and made the Arabic version of the *Maktūbāt* available to the Arab world. Shaikh Muhammad Murād al-Makkī Qazzānī acquainted the Turk and Arab scholars with the mystical thought of the Mujaddid by writing the *Zail ur-Rushahāt*. The Arabic translation of the *Maktūbat* was made available under the title of *Ad-Darr al-Maknūnāt al-Nafisi*. Shaikh Muhammad Nur-ud-dīn Uzbekī wrote the *'Atiyāt al-Wahhāb al-Fāsilah bayna ul-Khatā' wa as-Sawāb*. The book was popularly received in the Arab countries and Turkey and it helped to clear the mist of misunderstanding about the Mujaddid.[1] The response to these concerted efforts is

1. A more complete list of scholars who were won over by the scholars allied to the Mujaddidyah order and who later on took up the task of defending his thought can be seen in the *Nuzhat-ul-Khawātir* (Vol. v, p. 48).

adequately demonstrated by the complimentary remarks of a renowned scholar Shihāb-ud-dīn Mahmūd Alūsī al-Baghdādī (d. 1270/1854) about Shaikh Ahmad in his *Rūh-ul-Ma'ānī* in which he has profusely quoted from the *Maktūbāt*. By that time the flutter of opposition to Shaikh Ahmad among the circle of scholars had completely passed away.

> "As for the foam, it passeth away as scum upon the banks, while as for that which is of use to mankind, it remaineth in the earth. Thus Allah coineth the similitude."[1]

The scholars who had played a leading role in the dispargement of Shaikh Ahmad in Hijāz were all Kurdis. Shaikh Ibrāhīm al-Kaurānī was a Kurd and so was Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rasūl al-Barzanjī who belonged to Shahrzor. Strange to say that Maulānā Khālid, also of Shahrzor, was selected by God to propagate the mystic order of Shaikh Ahmad who succeeded in spreading it to Irāq, Syria, Kurdistān and Turkey in a way unprecedented in the history of mysticism.

1. Q. XIII: 17

CHAPTER X

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF MUJADDIDYAH ORDER

The Eminent Deputies

It would be difficult or rather impossible to catalogue all the noted deputies of the Mujaddid and their achievements. The number ran into thousands who were spread all over the Islamic world. We have already mentioned the names of a few of them who were commissioned to preach either outside the country or were sent to the different cities of India. We propose to give here only the names of the outstanding deputies with a bit detailed description of the reformative endeavour of the two, Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm and Syed Ādam Binnaurī, which would be helpful in estimating the popularity of the Mujaddidyah order, and the great task it has performed in reforming the morals and religious life of the Muslims. There is the least doubt that this success was achieved by the Will of God which always comes to the aid

of every virtuous task undertaken with the sincerity of purpose and in accordance with the way shown by the holy Prophet.

The more eminent deputies[1] of Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid Alf Thani were: 1. Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī, 2. Maulānā Ahmad Barkī, 3. Maulānā Ahmad Daibanı (Deobandi), 4. Maulānā Amān Ullah Lāhorī, 5. Maulānā Badr-ud-dīn Sirhindī, 6. Shaikh Badī-ud-dīn Sahāranpūrī, 7. Shaikh Hasan Barkī, 8. Shaikh Hamīd Bangālī, 9. Hājī Khizr Khān Afghānī, 10. Mīr Saghīr Ahmad Rūmī, 11. Shaikh Tāhir Badakhshī, 12. Shaikh Tāhir Lāhorī, 13. Khwājā Ubaid Ullah alias Khwājā Kalān, 14. Khwājā 'Abdullah alias Khwājā Khurd, 15. Shaikh 'Abdul Ha'i Hisārī, 16. Maulāna 'Abdul Wāhid Lāhorī, 17. Shaikh 'Abdul Hādi Farūqi Badāūnī, 18. Maulānā Farrukh Husain Harwī, 19. Maulānā Qāsim 'Alī, 20. Shaikh Karīm-ud-dīn Bābā Hasan Abdālı, 21. Saiyid Muhib Ullah Mānikpūri, 22. Shaikh Muhammad Sādiq Kābulī, 23. Maulānā Muhammad Sālih Kaulābi, 24. Maulānā Muhammad Siddīq Kashmi, 25. Shaikh Muzammil, 26. Hāfiz Mahmūd Lāhorī, 27. Shaikh Nūr Muhammad Patnı, 28. Maulānā Yār Muhammad Jadīd Badakhshī Tālqānī, 29. Maulānā Yār Muhammad Qadīm, 30. Shaikh Yūsuf Barkī, and 31. Maulānā Yūsuf Samarqandī.

Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm[2]

A prefound sage and leader of the learned, Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm was the dearly beloved son of Shaikh Ahmad, whom he closely resembled not only in external appearance but also in his inward perfection. As a spiritual

1. This list has been taken from the *Hazrat Mujaddid Alf Thānī* by Zawwār Husain and published by Idāra Mujaddidiyah, Karachi. For details *see* pp. 724-800 of the above-mentioned book and the article *"Tazkirah Khulfā'i Mujaddid Alf Thānī"* by Nasīm Ahmad Farīdī (pp. 310-351) in the *Tazkirah Imām Rabbānī Mujaddid Alf Thānī* compiled by Muhammad Manzoor Nomani.
2. The account given here has been taken from the *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. V.

descendant of his renowned father, he was a paragon of virtue and most celebrated for the beauty of his soul.

Born on 11th Shawwal 1007/27th April, 1599, he read the first few books from his elder brother Khwājā Muhammad Sādiq and then studied at the feet of his father and Shaikh Muhammad Tāhir of Lahore. He committed the holy Qur'ān to his heart within a brief period of three months and, like the reputed author of the *Sharh Waqāyah*, used to learn the writings of his father by heart while copying them. He succeeded his father after the death of the latter. Thereafter he went for pilgrimage and stayed for a long time in Medina before his return to India. The rest of his life he spent in guidance of the people and teaching *Tafsir Baidāwī*, *Mishkāt*, *Hidayah*, *'Azodi* and *Talwih* to his disciples.

Shaikh Murād b. Abdullah Qazānī writes in the *Zail-ur-Rushahāt* that he was, like his father, one among the signs of God who illuminated the world and dispelled the darkness of ignorance and blameworthy innovations. Thousands of his disciples were helped by him to attain spiritual perfection and the knowledge of God. The number of persons who took oaths of allegiance to him is stated to be nine hundred thousand of which seven thousand qualified as his spiritual descendants. Of these one was Shaikh Habīb Ullah Bukhārī who rose to the position of most revered mystic Shaikh of his time in Khurāsān and Transoxiana, spread the light of *sunnah* in Bukhārā and the surrounding lands and guided four thousand among his disciples to attain the perfection of spirit enabling them to impart instruction to others in the disciplines of divinity.

The letters of Shaikh Ma'sūm were compiled in three volumes and like the *Maktūbāt* of his father, are a repository of wisdom and intricacies of mysticism, serving as a key to the letters of his father.

He died on the 9th Rabī'-ul-Āwwal, 1079/7th August, 1668, at Sirhind where his grave is still visited by a large number of people.

Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī[1]

A prince of those endowed with divine knowledge and the very crucible of love for God, Saiyid Ādam b. Ismāil occupied a prominent position among the noted spiritual guides of the Naqshbandiyah order. His birth was promised by the holy Prophet in a vision to his father who lived in the village Binnaur, near Sirhind, where Saiyid Ādam spent his childhood days.

After entering the religious life Saiyid Ādam spent the first two months at Multān under the guidance of Hājī Khizr Raughānī, a disciple of Shaikh Ahmad and thereafter he came to pursue the mystical discipline at the feet of Shaikh Ahmad. However, Saiyid Ādam was first attracted to the divine, according to the *Khulāsatul Ma'ārif*, in the company of Shaikh Muhammad Tāhir of Lahore who is stated to have inherited the same from his father Shaikh Askandar and grandfather Shaikh Kamāl-ud-din Kaithali. In any case, Saiyid Adam attained the sublime state of spiritual elevation hardly encompassed by his contemporary mystics. His way of mystical experience was meticulous adherence to the *shari'ah* and the *sunnah* of the Prophet. He never made any deviation, either in utterance or practice, from strict compliance with the theological doctrine.

Innumerable persons were helped by him to walk the path of virtue and goodness; four hundred thousand are reported to have taken oath of allegiance to him, of which about a thousand were guided to attain the spiritual insight. His cloister had at least a thousand guests every day who came there for the satisfaction of their spiritual urge. It has been related in the *Tazkirah Ādamiyah* that when Saiyid Ādam went to Lahore in 1052/1642, he was accompanied by ten thousand

1. The account given here has been taken from the *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. V.

persons including several nobles and mystics. Shāhjahān happened to be present at Lahore in those days and he felt perturbed at the popularity of Saiyid Ādam. He sent his minister S'ad Ullah Khān but the scant attention paid by the Shaikh to the prime minister caused to deepen the misunderstanding between the two and on S'ad Ullah Khan's report the king ordered Saiyid Ādam to proceed for performance of the pilgrimage. Accordingly, Saiyid Ādam left for Hijāz with his friends and relatives and stayed at Medina after performing the *haj*, where he ultimately breathed his last.

Saiyid Ādam has to his credit a number of mystical tracts, of which the *Khulāsatul Ma'ārif*, in Persian, covers two volumes. It opens with the words: 'Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds; in great measure be He glorified to the extent of the perfections of his names and bounties.' His another work is entitled *Nikāt-ul-Asrār*.

Saiyid Ādam did not know reading or writing for he had not been educated by any one. He died on the 23rd of Shawwāl-1053/25th December, 1643 at Medina and was buried in the Jannatul Baqī near the grave of Caliph Uthmān.

Other Eminent Mystics

We propose to describe here, albeit briefly, some of the noted mystics associated with Khwājā M'asūm which will indicate the popularity enjoyed by them and the great influence they wielded on the Muslims of their day. A detailed account of their lives and works can be found in their biographies or other works purporting to describe sufi traditions. In so far as the sufis of India are concerned, sufficient details have been given in the fifth, sixth and seventh volumes of the *Nuzhat-ul-Khawātir*, the renowned work of Hakīm Saiyid 'Abdul Ha'ī.

Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn Sirhindī

The system of Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm was extensively diffused by his eldest son and spiritual successor Khwājā

Saif-ud-dīn (1049-1096/1639-1685) who achieved a great success in realising the reformist ends of Shaikh Ahmad by renewing the awareness of God and insisting on following the *sunnah* of the Prophet to the exclusion of all subsequent accretions and innovations. He took up his residence at Delhi, as desired by his father, and established the famous cloister which was later developed into an international centre of guidance and devotional exercises by Mirzā Mazhar Jān Jānan and Shāh Ghulām ʿAlī, radiating spirituality to Afghānistān and Turkistān, on the one hand, and to Irāq, Syria and Turkey, on the other.

Aurangzab had, as stated earlier, taken an oath of allegiance to Khwājā Muhammad Mʿasūm and was imparted spiritual training by Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn. The annalists of the time record the incident that when the Khwājā went into the royal chamber, he objected to the pictures painted on its walls. The king at once ordered to efface all such paintings. The incident was reported by the Khwājā to his father in a letter in which he wrote:

> "How virtuous it is of the king that despite his magnificence and majesty, my advice was heeded and the counsel of this humble fellow was readily implemented."[1]

Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn used to report the spiritual experiences of the king to his father who expressed satisfaction, in one of his letters, at the progress made by the latter.

> "What you have stated of the king, the protector of religion, as, for example, the *zikr* (remembrance of divine names) pervading the recesses of his heart, attaining the state of *sultān-uz-zikr* (supreme remembrance) and the *rābita* (communion), absence of distraction, acceptance of the truthful advice, getting rid of the things forbidden and abandonment of desires, speak of his condition minutely. One ought to offer thanks to God for these qualities are

1. *Makātīb Khwājā Mʿasūm*, Vol. III, No. 227.

now extinct in the kings."[1]

Emperor Aurangzeb used to keep himself in touch with Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm for traversing the stages of sufi path. Muhammad Sāqi Musta'id Khān, the author of *Maāsir Ālamgīrī*, has in the chronicles of the twenty-first year described the departure of the Emperor from the garden known as Hayāt Bakhsh, in the night of 13th Muharram, 1080/3rd June, 1669, to the house of the Khwājā and his return to the royal palace after remaining there for some time listening to the Khwājā's discourses and rendering honour to him.[2]

The Khwājā was very particular in commending the lawful and forbidding the unlawful. He had so given himself up to the task that according to Shaikh Murād b. 'Abdullah al-Qazzānī, the author of the *Zail-ur-Rushahāt*, he had almost uprooted the blameworthy innovations from the country. It was this concern for the *shari'ah* which had earned for him the title of *muhtasib-ul-ummah* (censor of the community) from his father. He possessed a spiritual charm that used to cast a spell on those who happened to meet him. His disciples seemed to be carried away as if in a trance in his cloister. At the same time, he had such a dominating personality that even the nobles and kings did not dare sit down in his peresence and kept standing obediently. He was also immensely popular; over fourteen hundred people coming daily to pay a visit to him were provided with the victuals desired by them.[3]

After the death of Khwājā Saif-ud-dīn, his place was taken by his spiritual successor, Saiyid Nūr Muhammad Badāūnī (d. 1135/1723) who kept the torch of spirituality burning in his cloister. Thereafter, Mirzā Mazhar Jān Jānān took the seat of these masters. We shall speak about Mirzā Mazhar Jān Jānān later on.

1. *Maktūbāt Khwājā M'asūm*, Vol. III, No. 227
2. *Maāsir 'Alamgīrī*, Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1871, p. 84
3. *Zail-ur-Rushahāt*, pp. 48-49

From Khwājā Muhammad Zubair to Maulānā Fazlur Rahmān Ganj-Morādābādī

The second son of Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm was Khwājā Muhammad Naqshband (1034-1114/1625-1702) who was also known as Hujjat Allāh Naqshaband. Appointed as his chief spiritual successor by Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm, he set about to propagate his father's way in all sincerity, temperance and humility.

Khwājā Muhammad Zubair (d. 1151/1738) b. Abīl 'Ālā', a grandson of Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm, succeeded Khwājā Muhammad Naqshband and achieved such a universal popularity as was not enjoyed by any other mystic of the period. The path he took from his house to the mosque was covered with turbans and wraps by the nobles and grandees so that he may not have to step down on the bare ground. If he ever went to see any ailing person or to take part in a repast, the procession formed by his followers resembled a royal march.[1]

Khwājā Muhammad Zubair had several noted successors of whom three, Shāh Ziā Ullah, Khwājā Muhammad Nāsir 'Andlīb and Khwājā 'Abdul 'Adl were particularly illustrious. The spiritual successor of the first was Shāh Muhammad Āfāq; the son of the second was Khwājā Mīr Dard Dihlawī; and the third was succeeded by Shāh 'Abdul Qādir Dihlawī, the first Urdu translator of the Qur'ān. All of them were highly respected mystics.

Khwājā Ziā Ullah was a profound sage endowed with both inward and outward perfection. Shāh Ghulām 'Ali used to say: "One who has not seen the winsome qualities of the Mujaddid may direct his eyes to Khwājā Ziā Ullah."[2]

His spiritual successor Shāh Muhammad Āfāq (1160-1251/1747-1835) was granted immense popularity by God and was an acknowledged mystic of the north-west India. When

1. *Durr-ul-Ma'ārif.*
2. *Ibid.*, p. 16

he went to Kābul, King Shāh Zamān Khān took an oath of allegiance to him.

The noted spiritual successor of Shāh Muhammad Āfāq was Maulānā Fazlur Rahmān Ganj-Moradābādī (1208-1313/ 1794-1895) whose spiritual magnetism, love of God, rigorous discipline in following the *shari'ah* and deep knowledge of the *sunnah* were a source of spiritual enlightenment to the people in northern India over half a century. In his own words it was a power of love in action.[1]

Hakīm Saiyid 'Abdul Hā'i, the author of encyclopedic biographical accounts, is known for the catholicity of his views and critical evaluation of characters. He writes about Maulānā Fazlur Rahmān Ganj Morādābādī:

> "A throng of his admirers used to surround and follow him; gifts used to be showered on him by the nobility and the rich; and people used to come from far off places every day, making him the observed of all observers. He became a worthy prince of the mystics, graced with fame and popularity not enjoyed by any sufi Shaikh of the period.
>
> He was such a great worker of miracles that none

1. Most of the founders and directors of the Nadwatul 'Ulamā were spiritually attached to Maulānā Fazlur Rahmān Ganj Morādābādī as, for instance, Maulānā Saiyid Muhammad 'Alī of Monghyr, the founder and first director of the Nadwatul 'Ulamā, Maūlānā Masih-uz-Zamān Khān of Shāhjahānpūr (teacher of the Nizām of Hyderābād, Mahboob 'Alī Khān), Maulānā Saiyid Zahūr-ul-Islām of Fatehpūr, Maulānā Saiyid Tajammul Husain of Bihār, Maulānā Hakim Saiyid 'Abdul Ha'i, the prolific writer and director of Nadwatul 'Ulamā, Nawāb Sadr Yār Jang, Maulānā Habībur Rāhmān Khān Sherwānī (Minister for Religious Affairs, Hyderābād), and Hosām-ul-Mulk Safi-ud-daulā Nawāb Saiyid Alī Hasan Khān, another director of the Nadwatul 'Ulamā, were all disciples of Maulānā Fazlur Rahmān. Maulānā Saiyid Muhammad 'Alī of Monghyr also propagated the way of his master as his spiritual successor.

among the earlier saints except Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir could be cited by way of comparison."[1]

Mirza Mazhar Jān Jānān and Shāh Gulām 'Alī

Mirza Mazhar Jān Jānān Shahīd[2] (1111-1195/1699-1781) was the spiritual successor of Saiyid Nūr Muhammad. For thirty-five years he kept the hearts of the people at Delhi illuminated through his love-divine. The great scholar Shāh Walīullah writes about him.

> "Nothing about India is concealed from me for I have been born and brought up in this country. I have also visited and seen Arabia. As for Afghānistān and Irān, I have heard of the conditions prevailing there recounted by reliable persons. The conclusion I have reached, after giving thought to all I know, is that no profound sage so conscientious in following the path of the holy law delivered by the Prophet, no spiritual mentor so successful in guiding the people on the path of spirit and no mystic so strong in divinity is to be found these days in any country mentioned earlier by me. There might have been such men of God in the days gone-by but, the truth is; that the number of such virtuous persons is extremely limited in every age, let alone these days of chaos and confusion."[3]

Shāh Ghulām 'Alī was succeeded by several illustrious mystics, such as, Maulānā Na'im Ullah of Bahraich (1153-1218/1740-1803), the author of *M'amūlat Mazhar*, Qāzi Sanā Ullah of Panīpat (d. 1225/1810), another penman and scholar of encylopedic knowledge who wrote the *Tafsīr Mazharī* and *Mālā*

1. *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. VIII. For a detailed account see the author's *Maulānā Fazlur Rahmān Gang Morādābādī.*
2. His name was Shams-ud-din Habīb Ullah while Jān Jānān was the name given to him by Aurangzeb soon after his birth.
3. *Kalamāt-i-Tayyabāt*, pp. 163-65

Bud Minh and Maulānā Ghulām Yahyā of Bihār (d. 1180/1766) but the most worthy successor who renovated the Mujaddidyah order was Shāh Ghulām 'Ali of Batālah (1156-1240/1743-1825). The last mentioned was a man of great spiritual perfection who achieved world-wide fame attracting travellers of the path of mysticism from every part of the country and other Muslim lands. There was hardly a city in India where he did not have a few disciples. In Ambāla alone there were fifty disciples of Shāh Ghulām 'Ali Batālvī. Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan, a contemporary of the Shāh, writes in the *Āthār us-Sanādīd*:

> "I have myself seen in the cloister of the Shaikh people belonging to Rūm (Turkey) and Syria, Baghdād, Egypt, China and Ethiopia pledging allegiance to the Shaikh and dedicating themselves to his order. Furthermore, there were the disciples of the Punjab and Afghānistān who came to the hospice in large numbers. There also lived at least five hundred of them in the cloister who were provided free boarding and lodging."[1]

Shāh Ra'ūf Ahmad Mujaddidī who spent a few days in the company of the Shāh in his *khanqāh* writes that the disciples present on the 28th of Jamādi al-Ūla, 1231/26th April, 1816 hailed from Samarkand, Bukhāra, Tāskent, Hisār, Qandhār Kābul, Peshāwar, Kāshmir, Multan, Lahore, Sirhind, Amroha, Sanbhal, Rampur, Bareilly, Lucknow, Jā'is, Bahraih, Gorakhpūr, 'Azīmābād (Patna), Dacca, Hyderābad, Poona etc.[2] The popularity enjoyed by the Shāh reminds one of the Persian couplet of Maulānā Khālid Rūmī.

> Would that somebody conveyed slyly to that prince of the beloved,
> That the world has come to life again by his rainy cloud.[3]

1. *Āthār us-Sanādīd*, Chap. IV
2. *Durr-ul-M'aārif*, p. 106
3. The eulogy consisting of 69 couplets has been preserved by Shāh 'Abdul Ghanī Muhaddith of Delhi.

The celebrated disciples of Shāh Ghulām 'Ali diffused his order far and wide. Shāh Muhammad Na'im, also known as Miskīn Shāh (d. 1264/1848), who was a spiritual successor of Shāh Ghulām 'Alī's disciple Shāh S'ad Ullah, took up residence in Hyderabad where he was acknowledged as a spiritual guide by the ruler of Hyderābād, Mīr Mahboob 'Alī Khān Āsaf Jāh VI.[1] Another notable disciple of Shāh S'ad Ullah was Saiyid Muhammad Bādshāh Bukhārī[2] (d. 1328/1910). Others of the spiritual line of Shāh Ghulām 'Alī through whose efforts the Mujaddidyah order made rapid progress were Shāh Ra'ūf Ahmad Mujaddidī (1201-1266/1787-1850) who founded a hospice at Bhopal,[3] Maulānā Shāh Bashārat Ullah (d. 1254/1838), who set up a cloister in Bahraich, Shaikh Gul Muhammad, who popularised it in a Bukhārā[4] and Shaikh Ahmad, who came from Baghdād to obtain leave of Shāh Ghulam 'Ali to guide the people in his spiritual order.[5]

Maulānā Khālid Rūmī

Propagation of the Mujaddidyah order in Irāq, Syria and Turkey was taken upon himself by a Kurd scholar, Maulānā Khālid Rūmī by name, who spanned the continent in one year to traverse the path of spirit under the guidance of Shāh Ghulām 'Alī. He applied himself to the task of spiritual perfection with such a singleness of heart that whenever any scholar or mystic of Delhi came to see him, he always gave the reply that he could not divert his attention to anything else without accomplishing the task he had come for. It is stated that

1. *Mukhbir-i-Daccen*, Madras, 2nd January, 1896.
2. He had settled down in Hyderābād where his cloistar was headed by Maulānā Saiyid 'Abdullah Shāh (d. 1384/1964), the author of the *Zajājat-ul-Masābih*.
3. Which was latter on headed by Pīr Abū Muhammad and then his son Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Y'aqūb.
4. *Durr-ul-Ma'ārif*, p. 125.
5. *Ibid.* p. 144

when the noted scholar of the time, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz paid a visit to Maulānā Khālid Rūmī, the latter sent for Shāh Abū Sa'eed asking him to tell the Shāh that he would himself call upon him after achieving his goal.

No sooner did Maulānā Khālid Rūmī return to his home than his name and fame were noised abroad attracting innumerable persons to his threshold. The events pertaining to Friday, the 24th of Rajab, 1231,[1] recorded by Shāh Ra'ūf Ahmad in the *Durr-ul-Ma'ārif* read: "A man who had heard of the eminence of Maulānā Khālid Rūmī has returned after meeting him in Baghdād. He says that about a hundred thousand persons have already affirmed allegiance to the Maulānā and about a thousand of them, many of whom are reputed scholars, always remain at hand to attend to his orders like servants."[2] In a letter written by Maulānā Khālid Rūmī to Shāh Abū Sa'eed he gave an account of the immense popularity gained by the Mujaddidiyah order in the Middle East.

> "In all the dominions of Rūm (Turkey), Arabia, Hijāz Irāq and certain non-Arab countries including the whole of Kurdistān the *silsilah* of Naqshbandiyah order has been received as a greedily desired object. One can see the young and the old, in every gathering and concourse, mosque and *madrasa*, keenly discussing the merits of Imām Rabbānī Mujaddid Alf Thānī. The enthusiasm witnessed here these days is without a parallel in any land or at any time Although the description I have given here amounts to self-indulgence and impudence and I feel ashamed of it, I have only penned these facts for the information of my companions."[3]

Ibn 'Ābidīn, commonly known as 'Allāmā Shāmī, was a

1. 20th June, 1816
2. *Durr-ul-Ma'ārif*. p. 170
3. *Tazkirāh Imām Rabbānī* (cited from the article of Maulānā 'Abdus Shakūr Farooqī)

devoted disciple of Maulānā Khālid Rūmi. In addition to the *Radd ul-Mukhtār Sharh Al-Durr ul-Mukhtār*, Shāmī has also written the *Sull ul-Hosām al-Hindī l' 'Nasrata Maulānā Khālid al-Naqshbandī* which gives, besides confuting the charges levelled against the Maulānā by his detractors, a brief biographical account of Maulānā Khālid Rumī. The Maulānā belonged to village Qarah Dāgh near Sulaimāniyah mountains where he was born in the year 1190/1776. After going through the then prevalent courses of study he acquired mastery in the then religious sciences as well as logic, mathematics and astronomy and then got busy in imparting instruction to the students of higher grades in medicine, dialectics, syntax etc. at Sulaimāniyah. In the year 1220/1805 he went to Mecca for *haj* where he felt a mysterious urge to take a trip to India. He returned, however, to Syria and it was there that he came to know about the spiritual eminence of Shāh Ghulām 'Alī from one of his disciples. He left for India in 1224/1809 and reached Delhi after one year taking the rough track through Irān, Afghānistān and Lahore. Within a short period of one year he attained perfection in the disciplines of five mystical orders and was granted permission by his Shaikh to go back to his own land for guiding others on the path of spirit. He went back to Baghdād in 1228/1813, after a brief stay of five months at his home, and very soon became a cynosure of the people in that metropolis. His popularity stirred the envy of certain persons who raised a tumult against him. However, at the instance of the governor of Baghdād Sa'eed Pāshā a number of scholars of the city certified his spiritual attainments and the soundness of his religious views. Thereafter innumerable persons belonging to Kirkūk, Arbil, Mosil, 'Amādiyah, A'intāb, Aleppo, Syria, Medina, Mecca and Baghdād got themselves enlisted to the order of Maulānā Khālid Rūmī.

'Allāmā Shāmī then gives an estimate of Maulānā Khālid's character and a list of his literary works. He also cites the opinion of a noted litterateur and poet Shaikh 'Uthmān.

Maulānā Khālid migrated to Syria in 1238/1823 alongwith a large number of his disciples. The whole country virtually converged to receive him with the highest honour and to obtain his blessings. The Maulānā guided the people not only on the path of spirit but also saw that they neglected not to observe even a dot of divine law. The Maulānā died of plague on 14th Dhī Qa'ada, 1242/9th June, 1827 and was buried in Qāsiyon. He was a lineal descendant of Caliph 'Uthmān b. 'Affān. Shāmi has narrated a dream of the Maulānā wherein he had seen that he was leading the funeral prayer of Caliph 'Uthmān. After narrating the dream he told the author that since he belonged to the lineage of Caliph 'Uthmān the dream was a foreboding of his own death. He narrated the dream at *maghrib* (sunset), gave directions about his will after the *'Ishā* (night) prayers, and thereafter went to his house where he was taken ill the same night and answered the summons of death before the crack of dawn.[1]

Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed and His Spiritual Descendants

The chief successor of Shāh Ghulām 'Ali, providing the nucleus from which his *silsilah* (line of succession) gained fame and popularity, was Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed ibn Shāh Abū Sa'eed (1217-1277/1802-1861). After the death of his father, Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed took charge of the cloister of Shāh Ghulām 'Alī and Mirza Mazhar Jān Jānān in 1250/1834 and continued to spread the light of Mujaddidyah order for 23 years till 1273/1857. He had to leave India during the uprising of 1857 whence he went away to Mecca and thereafter settled down in Medina. He died at Medina after a few years but during this brief period hundreds of Arabs and Turks pledged fealty

1. *Sull ul-Hosām al-Hindī*, p. 318-25. The Maulana's chain of spiritual descent still exists in Syria and Turkey where the author met a number of sufī guides of his order at Damascus, Halab and several cities of Turkey.

to him. An eye-witness report is on record that if Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed had remained alive for a few years more, the number of his disciples would have run into hundreds of thousands.[1]

It is difficult to enumerate all the deputies of Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed who had attained the perfection to guide others in his spiritual order. *Manāqib Ahmadiyah*[2] records eighty deputies. One of these was Shaikh Dost Muhammad Qandhārī who was succeeded by Khwājā 'Uthmān Dāmānī (d. 1314/1896). The latter employed himself in spreading abroad the instruction in divinity from Mūsā Za'ī, a town of district Derā Isma'il Khān. His chief deputy, Khwājā Sīrāj-ud-dīn (d. 1333/1915), became a great inspirer and caused the order to spread quickly to the distant lands. Endowed with an impressive personality and wide learning, he was able to combine the austerities of the mystical path with the cultivation of the science of *hadīth*. Maulānā Husain 'Ali Shāh (1283-1363/1867-1944) of Wān Bachrān[3] was the chief spiritual successor of Khwājā Sirāj-ud-dīn. He was a great reformer of the creed and morals who made the unalloyed Unity of God (*tawheed khālis*) the focus of his spiritual life.

Another noted mystic of the Mujaddidyah order during this period was Shaikh Shāh Imām 'Alī Makānwī[4] (1212-1282/1797-1865) whose popularity attracted devotees in such large numbers that 300 goats were slaughtered every day for preparation of repast to feed his guests.[5] His initiary pedigree goes back to Shaikh Ahmad through one of his Shaikhs 'Abdul Ahad Wahdat *alias* Shāh Gul.

1. Letter of Shāh Muhammad 'Umar s/o Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed to Maulānā Saiyid 'Abdus Salām of Haswa.
2. Written by Shāh Muhammad Mazhar.
3. A town in district Miānwāli of Punjab, Pakistān.
4. Makān Sharīf is a town in district Gurdāspūr. Its ancient name was Ratar Chatra.
5. For details see the *Tadkirah Be Mithl Rajgān-i-Rajaur*, pp. 508-21, by Mirzā Zafar Ullah Khān.

Another mystic of great distinction succeeding Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed was Maulānā Shāh 'Abdus Salām Wāstī (1234-1299/1819-1882) of Haswa. He was a man of great sanctity and spiritual perfection who popularised the mystic order of his precursors in the then United Provinces.[1]

Shāh 'Abdur Rashīd[2] (1237-1287/1822-1870) was the eldest son of Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed. He succeeded to the spiritual authority of his father after the latter died at Medina but later on migrated to Mecca where he continued to guide the people on the path of spirit. He died at Mecca and was buried in the Jannat ul-M'alā. His son Shāh Muhammad M'asūm (1263-1341/1847-1923) established Khanqāh-i-Mas'ūmī at Rāmpūr where he spent 23 years in spiritual guidance of the people. He returned to Mecca and died there in 1341/1923.

Shāh Muhammad Mazhar (1248-1301/1832-1884) was the second son of Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed. He was a perfect mystic who gained wide popularity with disciples spread all over Samarkand, Bukhāra, Qazzān, Turkey, Afghānistān, Irān, Arabia and Syria. He also constructed a three storeyed cloister known as Rabāt Mazharī at Medina, in 1290/1873, which is situated midway between Bāb-un-Nisā and Jannatul Baqī.

The third son of Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed was Shāh Muhammad 'Umar (1244-1298/1828-1881). Shāh Abul Khair Mujaddidī was his son and spiritual successor.

Shāh 'Abdul Ghanī

Shāh 'Abdul Ghanī (1235-1296/1820-1879), the younger brother of Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed, was also a man of great spirituality whose remarkable success in combining the cult of the mystics with the teaching of *hadīth* was not shared by any scholar save Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz Dehlawī. He had the credit of producing such scholars as Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim

1. For details see *Nuzhatul-Khawātir*, Vol. 7
2. He was spiritual guide of Nawāb Kalb 'Alī Khān of Rāmpur.

Nānautwi and Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī who founded the great educational institutions of Deoband and Mazāhir-ul-'Uloom of Sahāranpūr which have made *hadīth* a popular subject of study in India. During the great upheaval of 1857, Shāh 'Abdul Ghanī left India for Hijāz, alongwith his elder brother, and settled down in Medina. Like the great Indian savant of *hadīth*, Shaikh 'Alī Muttaqi of *Kanz ul-'ummāl* fame, he spent the remaining period of his life in the teaching of *hadīth* and was ultimately laid to rest in the Jannat-ul-Baqī.[1]

Shāh 'Abdul Ghanī was succeeded by three heavenly-minded souls. One of these was Maulānā 'Abdul Haq (d.1333/1915) of Allāhābād who was more commonly known as Sāhib-ul-Dalā'il; the other was Shāh Abū Ahmad Mujaddidī (d. 1342/1924) of Bhopal; the third being was Shah Rafī-ud-dīn (d. 1308/1891) of Delhi, the first Principal of Dārul 'Uloom, Deoband, who left Muftī 'Azīz-ur-Rahman (d.1347/1928) as his spiritual successor. The cloister, graced by Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed and Shāh 'Abdul Ghanī, which had been a great centre of spiritual discipline for half a century in the country, remained vacant[2] for a long time until Shāh Abul Khair Mujaddidī (1272-1341/1855-1923), the grandson of Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed, once again made it a centre of spiritual instruction.

The descendants of Shaikh Ahmad left Sirhind in the fourth and fifth generations and took up quarters in different parts of the Islamic world. Although this step was taken to propagate and diffuse the Mujaddidyah order on a wider scale

1. One of the disciples of Shāh 'Abdul Ghanī, Shaikh Muhammad Yahya, (of Turhut, India), has written a biographical account of the Shāh and his spiritual successors.
2. The author has seen a letter of Shāh 'Abdul Ghanī, written by him from Medina in reply to a letter complaining about the deserted state of his cloister, in which he had urged the addressee to persuade Maulānā 'Abdus Salām of Haswa to take his place for he was the only person fitted for the task.

it eventually helped them from degenerating into mere mausoleum keepers—an institution marking the decline of many a mystical order. One branch of his house settled down in Kābul (in the Jawwād Fort[1]) to act as mentors of the people for spreading and stabilizing the spiritual truth of Islam. Nūr-ul-Mashā'ikh Shaikh Fazl 'Umar Mujaddidi also known as Sher Āghā belonged to this very extraction of Shaikh Ahmad's lineage. He had thousands of disciples in the Indo-Pak subcontinent.[2] His younger brother was Shaikh Muhammd Sādiq who held the post of ambassador for Afghānistān in several Arab countries and was also one of the founder-members of the Rābīta 'Ālam-i-Islāmī. He was an international figure highly respected for his keen interest in the welfare of Muslims as well as for his learning and piety. The two brothers were acknowledged leaders of Afghānistān and it was through their efforts that Nādir Shāh had to abdicate in favour of Amīr Amān Ullah Khān.[3]

Another branch of the Mujaddidyah family had taken up residence at Tando Sā'indād in Hyderābād, Sind. The two distinguished members of this line of succession were Khwājā Muhammad Hasan Mujaddidī and Hāfiz Muhammad Hāshim Jān Mujaddidī.[4]

1. Alas! the Russian aggression and anti-Islamic measures taken by the pro-Russian government installed in that country resulted in destruction of this spiritual centre, as most of the descendants of Shaikh Ahmad were either arrested or killed or forced to leave the country. The author had, during his tour of Afghānistān in 1973, witnessed this spiritual centre prosperous and pulsating with life, and had been recipient of the warm hospitality of Maulānā Muhammad Ibrāhīm, the son of Nūr-ul-Mashāikh Shaikh Fazl Umar Mujaddidī.
2. He died on the 5th of Muharram 1376/13th August, 1956. The author met him at Mecca and Lahore.
3. For details see *Darīā'y Kābul se Darīā'y Yarmūk tak* by the author.
4. The writer of these lines paid a visit to Shāh Muhammad Hasan Mujaddidī at his house in 1944. Hāfiz Hāshim Jān used to visit

(Continued on the next page)

Ihsāniyah Order

Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī was guided on the sufi path by Shaikh Ahmad who had wafted upon him the breath of felicity, but being a man of spiritual insight his own way soon came to be recognised as a distinctive school known by the name of Ihsāniyah order. Strange though it may seem but the order founded by an unlettered person ultimately claimed the allegiance of the most eminent scholars, authors, savants of *hadīth* and the founders of great educational institutions, all maintaining a careful orthodoxy and the spirit of Quranic piety. The illustrious thinker Shāh Walīullah, his son Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, the great martyr Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd and his virtuous companions like Maulānā Ismā'il Shahīd and Shāh Is'hāq, the founders of Darul Uloom Deoband, Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Nānautwī, Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī and many others were not only initiated in the Ihsāniyah order but had also obtained leave to impart spiritual instruction to others. Shāh Walīullah has paid a glowing tribute to Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī for his insight into the spiritual truth and classified him among the founders of great mystical orders.

Those who were guided to attain the perfection necessary for acting as the deputies of Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī are too numerous to be enumerated here. The author of the *Nuzhatul Khwātir* has, however, listed Diwān Khwājā Ahmad (d. 1088/1677) of Nasīrābād, Shaikh Bā Yazīd (d. 1090-1679) of Qasūr, Shāh Fath Ullah (d. 1100-1689) of Sahāranpūr and Shaikh S'ad Ullah Balkhārī (d. 1108-1696) of Lahore among the prominent *khulfā'* of Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī. The four heavenly-

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Nizām-ud-dīn at Delhi and once he came to the author's house at Dā'ira Shāh 'Alam Ullah in Rae Bareli. Both these lines of descent, settled in Kābul and Sind, converged at Shaikh Ghulām Muhammad M'asūm or Masūm II, who was the grandson of Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm.

minded souls who popularised his order were Saiyid Shāh 'Alam Ullah Hasanī (1033-1096/1624-1685), Shaikh Sultān of Ballia, Hāfiz Saiyid 'Abdullah of Akbārābād and Shaikh Muhammad Sharīf of Shāhābād.

Saiyid Shāh 'Alam Ullah and his family

Shāh 'Alam Ullah wanted to migrate to Arabia alongwith Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī but the latter had instructed him to remain in India, saying, "Saiyid, take it easy and go back to your place. You would be like a sun among the stars in the mystics of Oudh." Khwājā Muhammad Amīn Badakhshī, a close disciple and confidant of Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī has testified about Saiyid Shāh 'Alam Ullah that "severely simple in his living, he was known for his piety all over India and Arabia.....those who had seen him wondered if the Prophet's companions were like him".[1] According to the author of the *Bahr Zakhkhār*, he was "uniquely strenuous in fulfilling the demands of *sharī'ah* and despised everything worldly. He set an example of the prophetic way of life as few have done after the companions of the holy Prophet and the saints of God." When Shāh 'Alam Ullah went for performing the *haj*, the inhabitants of Mecca and Medina who saw him taxing his energies in following the *sharī'ah* in letter and spirit, very often remarked that he was Abū Darr of their times. He was ever mindful of following the example of the holy Prophet to the minutest detail and attained such a stage of sanctity that when he died, Aurangzeb had the vision of holy Prophet's demise in a dream. Extremely perturbed, the Emperor made enquiries about the significance of his dream and soon came to know that Shāh 'Alam Ullah had breathed his last in the very night he had had the vision.[2]

1. *Natā'ij-ul-Harmayn.*
2. Shaikh Wajīh-ud-dīn Ashraf, *Bahr Zakhkhār*; Shāh Ghulām Alī, *Durr-ul-Ma'ārif*, p. 46.

Shāh 'Alam Ullah and his descendants continued to practice the devotional rituals of the Ihsāniyah order. His fourth son, Saiyid Muhammad (d. 1156/1743) and later descendants like Saiyid Muhammad 'Adl *alias* Shāh L'al (d. 1192/1778), Saiyid Muhammad Sābir (d. 1163/1750), Shāh Abū Sa'eed (d. 1192/1778), Saiyid Muhammad Wāzeh, Maulānā Saiyid Muhammad Zāhir Hasanī (d. 1278/1861), Khwājā Ahmad b. Yāsīn Nasīrābādī (d. 1289/1872) and Shāh Ziā-un-Nabī (d. 1326/1908) were blessed with internal illumination. They guided thousands of persons on the path of moral rectitude and caused them to follow the example of the holy Prophet.[1]

Shaikh Sulṭān of Ballia

He was also a distinguished deputy of Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī. As stated in the *Natā'ij-ul-Harmayn*, Shaikh Sultān was endowed with inward and outward perfection. His name is very often mentioned in the mystical tracts alongwith Shāh 'Alam Ullāh.[2]

Hāfiz Saiyid 'Abdullah Akbarābādī

The third eminent spiritual successor of Saiyid Ādam Binnaurī who won widespread popularity for his Shaikh's order was Hāfiz Saiyid 'Abdullah of Akbarābād. He had among his disciples Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm Fārūqī (d. 1131/1719), father of Shāh Wali Ullah, whom he had also invested with the authority to initiate adherents to the Ihsāniyah order.[3] The

1. For a detailed account of these men of God see *Nuzhatul-Khawātir*, Vols. VI & VII.
2. He belonged to Lakhminia, district Begū Sir'āi in Bihār which was called Ballia in the past. His descendants are still to be found in that town. No writer has, however, left any detailed account of Shaikh Sultān.
3. The biographical details and virtues of Saiyid 'Abdullah have been preserved by Shāh Walīullah in the *Anfās-ul-'Arifin*, pp. 6-15, Mujtabi Press, 1335 A.H.

order was later on propagated on a wider scale through the efforts of Shāh Walīullāh and his son Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. Their line of spiritual descent was passed on from Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd to Hājī 'Abdur Rahīm Wilāytī and Miānjī Nūr Muhammad of Jhanjhānā and then it was spread by Hājī Imdād Ullah through his virtuous deputies like Maulānā Muhammad Qāsīm Nānautwī, Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī and Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī. It was further propagated by Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohi's disciples, Maulānā Mahmūd ul-Hasan of Deoband, Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm of Rā'ipūr, Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad of Sahāranpūr and Maulānā Saiyid Husain Ahmad Madnī. Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm was succeeded by Maulānā 'Abdul Qādir of Rā'ipūr while Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad had a worthy successor in Maulānā Muhammad Ilyās of Kandhla, founder of the Tablīgh movement of India. This line of spiritual succession went ahead to Maulānā Shaikh Muhammad Zakariya, a great scholar of *hadīth* and saintly soul of the present times.[2]

It would be difficult to give here even a brief account of the merits, virtues and services of Shāh Walīullah and Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz for it would require another volume of this series to do justice to them. We have already referred to the views of Shāh Walīullah about the spiritual perfection of Mirzā Mazhar Jān Jānān. In the *Muqāmāt-i.Mazhari*, Shāh Ghulām 'Alī has set fourth the following observation of the Mirzā about Shāh Walīullah:

> "Shāh Walīullah has expounded a new method and has a novel way of explaining the secrets of spiritual truth. He deserves to be called a godly soul among the scholars even including the mystics.....who have completely combined the outward and inward perfections. There are but a few persons like him who have given expression to

1. *Maqāmāt Mazhari*, Matba Ahmedi, pp. 60-61
2. Died 1st Sh'abān 1402 A.H./23rd May, 1982

unique and new thoughts."[1]

Fazl Haq of Khairābād was a renowned logician. When he went through the *Izālatul Khafā* of Shāh Walīullah he said to his students, "The author of this book is a man of encyclopedic knowledge, difficult to be encompassed by anyone." Muftī 'Ināyat Ahmad, an erudite scholar belonging to Kākorī remarked about Shāh Walīullah; "He is like the heavenly tree Tubā[2] whose roots are in his family and the branches in every Muslim house."[3] As for Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, his scholarly attainments, depth of knowledge in *hadith*, penmanship, spiritual perfection, virtuous character and deportment and anxiety for the well-being of Muslims give him an edge over the most prominent scholars of his age.[4]

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd and His Followers

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd was also initiated in the Ihsāniyah-Mujaddidyah order. Voluminous treatises like *Saiyid Ahmad Shahid—His Life and Mission* by Mohi-ud-dīn Ahmad are some of the books that trace his influence in the making of present-day Muslim community of Indo-Pak sub-continent.[5] The reformatory endeavour of the great Saiyid and the far-reaching effect his movement had on the subsequent development of Indian Muslims are now recognised by all, friends and foes alike. However, we cite here the views of some scholars of the earlier generations about the achievements of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd. Abdul Ahad writes:

> "More than forty thousand Hindus and other non-Muslims embraced Islam through his efforts and three

1. *Muqāmāt Mazharī*, Matb'a Ahmadī, pp. 60-61
2. A tree in Paradise
3. See *Nuzhatul-Khawāti*, Vol. VI
4. See *Nuzhatul-Khawātir*, Vol. VII
5. Another brochure entitled "*The Misunderstood Reformer*" by the author would also be found useful by the reauers.

million Muslims pledged allegiance to him. His deputies are still enlisting people to his order and the number of all such persons would run into several millions."[1]

Maulānā Wilāyat 'Alī (d. 1269/1853) who had undergone great sacrifices for the sake of Saiyid's cause, attested that:

"Thousands of persons left their unsound creeds to embrace Islam. Within a brief period of five or six years three million persons took *bi'at* at the hands of the Saiyid while another hundred thousand were initiated in his order during his pilgrimage."[2]

Another reputed scholar, Nawāb Saiyid Siddīq Hasan Khān of Bhopāl (d. 1307/1890) who had met a number of Saiyid's disciples bears witness to the task of reform and renovation of faith performed by the Saiyid in these words:

"A sign of God he was in guiding the people on the right path and making their hearts incline towards God. A large number of these pure-hearted souls attained saint-hood through the potent influence exerted by him, while his spiritual successors swept the country clean of all innovations and polytheistic thoughts and practices, and this great work of reformation is still continuing.....In short, there was none so godly and perfect of spirit in the whole world in those days, nor was there any mystic or religious scholar who exerted such a salutary influence even over one-tenth of the people as he did."[3]

It was through the Saiyid's magnetic personality that the founders of Deoband school, on the one hand, and a body of selfless workers headed by the great organisers of Sādiqpūr,[4]

1. *Sawāneh Ahmadī* by Molvi Muhammad J'afar of Thanesar, p. 65
2. *Risāla D'awat* included in the *Risā'il Tis'a* by Maulānā Wilāyat 'Alī
3. *Taqsār-o-Juyūd ul-Ahrār*, pp. 109-110
4. Sādiqpūr was the biggest centre of the Saiyid's *Jihād* movement in India which continued to provide guidance to the movement after Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd's death. Its leaders, Maulānā Wilāyat 'Alī

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on the other, were initiated in the Mujaddidyah-Naqshbandiyah order. The first group exerted itself to establish educational institutions for religious reform while the second struggled against foreign influences alien to the spirit and teachings of Islam. Both of them awakened the Muslims from their deep slumber at a time when they seemed to have no future at all. These disciples and deputies of the Saiyid restored the self-confidence of the Indian Muslims. The intellectual ferment and quickened vitality of the masses informed by a sense of Islamic identity stirred up by the followers of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, constituted a marvellous achievement of the Saiyid's movement which was not only unparalleled in the history of mysticism and religious reform but also protected the great Muslim community of this sub-continent against ever reverting back to unsound beliefs and polytheistic practices as witnessed in India towards the later half of the tenth century A.H.[1] All these achievements assign a honoured place to the Saiyid among the galaxy of great *mujaddids* whom we find giving a call to the faithful at every turning point of our history.

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Maulānā Yahya 'Alī, Maulānā Ahmadullah, Maulānā 'Ināyat 'Alī Ghāzī, Maulānā Abdullah and Maulānā 'Abdur Rahīm, all belonging to the Sādiqpūr house made great sacrifices for the cause.

1. For a detailed study see *Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd—His Life and Achievements* by Mohiuddin Ahmad, which forms another volume of the series of *Saviours of Islamic Spirit.*

CHAPTER XI

THE WORKS OF SHAIKH AHMAD MUJADDID SIRHINDI

A list of Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid Alf Thānī's work is being given here before drawing his biography to a close.

1. *Ithbāt un-Nubūwah* (Arabic). Its manuscript copies are still extant in the private collection of Mujaddid's descendants and their cloisters. It has been published in 1383/1963 by the Kutub Khāna Idāra Mujaddidyah, Nāzimābād, Karachi, alongwith Urdu translation. Subsequently its Arabic text was reprinted in 1385/1965 by Idāra Sa'adiyah Mujaddidyah, Lahore alongwith some other works of the author.

2. *Radd-i-Rawāfiz* (Persian). It was written in reply to the criticism by certain Irānian scholars, perhaps in the year 1001/1593. Parts of it are identical with the matters discussed in letters No. 80 and 202 of volume I of the *Maktūbāt*. This work has since seen several reprints. Hashmat 'Ali' Khān published the Persian text with Urdu translation of Prof. Dr. Ghulām Mustafa Khān from Rāmpūr in 1384/1964. Thereafter Idāra Sa'adiyah Mujaddidyah, Lahore, brought out the Persian

text and Urdu translation separately. Shāh Walıullah wrote a commentary to this work of Shaikh Ahmad but it was never published.

3. *Risalah Tahlıliyāh* (Arabic). The brochure was written in 1010/1601, and its manuscript is also extant. Idāra Mujaddidyah, Nāzimābād, Karāchi, brought out this work in 1384/1964 with Urdu translation. Thereafter the Arabic text was published in 1385/1965 by Idāra Sa'adiyah Mujaddidyah, Lahore, along with other works of Shaikh Ahmad.

4. *Sharh-i-Rubā'iyāt* (Persian). It comprises the commentaries on two quatrains of Khwājā Bāqi Billāh, first by the Khwājā himself, and the second by Shaikh Ahmad. Both the Idāra Sa'adīyah Mujaddidyah, Lahore, and Idāra Mujaddidyah, Nāzimābād, Karachi, have brought out this work in 1385/1965 and 1386/1966 respectively. Another commentary of the *Sharah-i-Rubaiyāt* was written by Shāh Walīullah under the title of *Kaśfh-ul-Ghain fi Sharh Rūbā'ytain* which has been printed by the Mujtabāī Press, Delhi, in 1310/1892.

5. *Ma'arif Laduniyah* (Persian). It deals with the mystical way of Shaikh Ahmad and investigates matters pertaining to *sulūk* (sincere compliance with the *shari'ah*) and *ma'rifah* (cognition of truth). Written by Shaikh Ahmad in 1015/1016 A.H./1606/1607 A. D.), it has 41 chapters, each elucidating an aspect of *m'arıfah*. This work in Persian was first published by Hāfiz Muhammad 'Ali Khān from Matb'a Ahmadī, Rāmpūr, in December, 1898. Thereafter it saw a number of reprints under the aegis of Majlis 'Ilmī, Dhābel, Idāra Sa'adiyah Mujaddidyah and Idāra Mujaddidyah in different years.

6. *Mabd'a-o-Ma'ād* (Persīan). The work deliberates upon the esoteric nature of spiritual truths and realities. The subjects discussed in the tract were scattered in different writtings of the Shaikh which were collected and compiled under 61 subheadings by one of his spiritual successors, Maulānā Muhammad Siddīq Kashmı, in 1019/1610. The oldest print of the book available now was brought out by Matb'a Ansārī of Delhi

in 1307/1889. It was published several times thereafter and the latest edition brought out by Idāra Mujaddidyah of Karāchi contains its Urdu rendering by Saiyid Zawwār Husain. It was translated into Arabic by Shāikh Murād of Mecca.

7. *Mukāshifāt 'Ayniyah* (Persian). Manuscripts of certain writings of the Shaikh preserved by his deputies were compiled by Maulānā Muhammad Hashim Kashmī after the death of the Shaikh in this collection. The work is dated 1051/1641. It was first published by Idāra Mujaddidyah of Karāchi with Urdu translation in 1384/1964.

8. *Maktūbāt Imām Rabbānī* (Persian). This is the most important work of Shaikh Ahmad giving expression not only to his heart-felt affections, sentiments and thoughts but also his researches in the realm of spiritual realities. It bears witness to his intellectual gifts and the originality of thought which have made him known as the Mujaddid Alf Thānī (Renewer of the Second Millennium). A separate volume would be required to explain the literary excellence as well as mystical revelations and subtle facts of esoteric realities discussed in it. It is one of those books written by an Indian scholar which has been rated highly by the scholars of other countries and rendered into Arabic and Turkish. It has also been one of the most esteemed and popular works in the circles of sufis, many of whom have made it the principal book of study. Neither its contents nor its literary style has grown stale with the passage of time.

The *Maktūbāt* contain 536 letters of Shaikh Ahmad divided into its three volumes. The first volume having 313 letters was compiled, in accordance with the desire expressed by the Shaikh himself, by Maulānā Yār Muhammad Jadīd Badakhshī Tālqānī in the year 1025/1616. The second volume containing 99 letters was assembled by Maulānā 'Abdul Ha'i Hisārī Shādmānī in 1028/1619 on the suggestion of Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm. In 1031/1622 the third volume with 114 letters was compiled by Maulānā Muhammad Kashmī. Ten more letters were later

on added to the last volume

The *Māktūbāt* has seen several reprints from time to time. It was most probably first published by the Newal Kishore Press, Lucknow, which reprinted it several times. Later on Matb'a Aḥmādī and Matb'a Murtazawī, both of Delhi, printed the book time and again. In 1329/1911 a de-luxe edition of the *Maktūbāt* was brought out by Maulānā Nūr Ahmad of Amritsar.[1]

THE END

1. Summarised from the *Hazrat Mujaddid Alf Thānī* by Maulānā Saiyid Zawwār Husain Shāh.

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Maulana S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Saviours Of Islamic Spirit

Vol. IV

HAKIM-UL-ISLAM
SHAH WALIULLAH

SAVIOURS OF ISLAMIC SPIRIT

VOLUME IV

(HAKIM-UL-ISLAM SHAH WALIULLAH)

by

Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

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FOREWORD

Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and blessings and peace be on the foremost among messengers and the last of the Prophets, Muhammad, and his progeny and the companions all, and those who followed them sincerely and summoned (the people) to his message, to the Day of Judgement.

Having finished the present volume of the *Saviours of Islamic Spirit* which takes the heroic story of religious and intellectual endeavour to Shāh Waliullah of Delhi and his successors and deputies, the writer of these lines finds himself on bended knees, glorifying the Lord from the core of his heart.

When the work on first volume of this series was started in Muharram 1372 A.H. (September 1952) beginning the story with the biographical accounts of Imām Hasan Basri and Caliph 'Umar b. 'Abdul 'Aziz, with the help of some sketchy notes jotted down for delivering a few lectures on the subject, it was difficult to visualize that the narration thus started would cover, step by step, the endeavours and struggles of all the reformers and savants of Islam in different lands from the beginning of the Islamic era to the twelfth century, and ultimately reach the stage requiring portrayal of the lives of two great revivalists, Mujaddid Alf Thāni and Shāh Waliullah Dehlawi. That this feat has been accomplished despite uncertainty of the span of life, vicissitudes

like ill-health and bereavements, heavy engagements, inconstancy and indecision and inability to read or write anything for fourteen years, it was nothing but the grace of God which caused it to be carried out successfully. The author can only offer his thanks to the Lord for this blessing by reciting the Quranic verse :

> "My Lord, inspire me to render thanks for Thy favours. Thou hast blessed me and my father and mother, and to be righteous well-pleasing to Thee; and do Thou admit me, through Thy mercy, amongst Thy righteous servants." (27-19)

And also repeat what the holy Prophet is reported to have said :

> "Praise be to Allah whose might and glory disposes one to righteous deeds."

This volume virtually completes the story of revivalist endeavour in so far as it narrates the reformative efforts of the twelfth century A. H. whose salutary effects can still be seen, at least in the Indo-Pak sub-continent, in the form of educational and religious institutions, reformative movements and literary creations designed to bring about an Islamic reawakening. The author cannot therefore be accused of any overstatement if he claims that with the series he wrote under the title of *Sirat Saiyid Ahmad Shahid*[1] in 1939 he has now brought to completion, at least in so far as this sub-continent is concerned, this narrative upto the thirteenth or rather to the fourteenth century for he has already compiled the biographies of quite a few scholars and savants of the last century (of which that of Maulana Mohammad Ilyās deserves to be mentioned here). In this manner the sixth and even a part of the seventh volume of this series has already been written by the author. It is now for other researchers and

1. This work has since been revised and brought out in two volumes by the Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, which should be deemed as the subsequent part of this series. For English version see *'Saiyid Ahmad Shahid—'His Life and Mission'* by Mohiuddin Ahmad also published by the Academy.

scholars to shed light on the achievements of reformers and revivalists of the thirteenth century in the remaining part of the Islamic world which is also essential for an appraisal of their intellectual and religious contributions. Reformist endeavour is a continuing process, not limited to any particular age or place. Attempts will continue to be made to renew the bases of faith, to purify it of all accretions and deviations during the course of time, to spread and develop the Islamic disciplines and to fight the profane, irreligious thoughts and practices till the time Islam or rather the world exists. Nobody can therefore claim to have pronounced the last word on the subject. A saying of the holy Prophet contains this prediction :

> "Every race shall have just and God-fearing men of (religious) learning who will be cleansing this religion from deviations of the over-credulous, false teachings of the irreligious and misrepresentations of the ignorant"

The reformatory work undertaken by Shāh Waliullah was both wide and varied in nature ; its predominant note was intellectual and academic ; it comprised instruction, penmanship, propagation of the Scripture and the *sunnah*. The Shāh explained the wisdom of religious teachings, showed the compatibility of transmitted knowledge with intellection as well as interrelation of different juristic schools which provided guidance to the coming generations Realising significance of the changing political scene in India and making a realistic estimate of the then decadent trends he made efforts to conserve the power of Islam and identity of Muslims He tried to revive Islamic disciplines for the benefit of coming generations. The author had naturally to exert himself more in studying and applying his mind to all these aspects of Shāh's dynamic personality. There was, however, no escape from his multifarious engagements yet he was able to complete this task, solely through the grace of God, with a shorter break than those that had held up the work on the earlier parts of this series.

The writer wishes to express his thanks to his colleagues and

friends who have helped him in tracing the source material and translating lengthy Arabic and Persian passages as well as in revision of the manuscript. They include Shams Tabriz Khan, a lecturer in the Lucknow University, Muhammad Burhan-ud-din Sumbhali, lecturer of Tafsīr and Hadīth in Darul 'Uloom Nadwatul 'Ulama. 'Atīq Ahmad, late Abul 'Irfān Nadwi, Syed Muhammad Murtaza Naqvi, Mohammad Haroon and Nisārul Haq Nadwi. He is also grateful to Nurul Hasan Rashīd of Kandhla who supplied the author some valuable information about the family and descendants of Shāh Waliullah and also indicated references therefor. Syed Mohammad Ghufrān Nadwi and Ghiyāth-ud-din Nadwi also worked hard in the preparation of the index and getting this work through the press.

The author lays no claim to this work being as attractive and appealing as one would expect of the resplendent personality of Shāh Waliullah but he hopes and prays God that it may be thought-provoking and serve to inspire others for further study and research in the great task accompalished by Shāh Waliullah whose relevance to the present times is self-evident.

The author is also grateful to Syed Mohiuddin for rendering this work into English which would it is hoped, dispel some of the misgivings among those who have an access only to the works in English language, which have been created by certain writers about Shāh Waliullah because of their own spite or ignorance.

LUCKNOW
January 15, 1992.

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

I

Islamic World in the Twelfth Century

Need for the Study of Twelfth Century Conditions

In the third volume of the *Saviours of Islamic Spirit* dealing with the life and achievements of Shaikh Ahmad Alf Thāni (971-1034 A.H./1564-1624 A.D.) attention has been invited to the importance of following up the events of the tenth century for an appreciation of the accompalishments of Shaikh Ahmad in these words :.

> "We shall have to take into account the fact that an age and its environs as well as the society are like a running stream whose every wave is impinged upon and interlocked with the other. Likewise, no country howsoever isolated from its neighbours can remain unconcerned and uninfluenced by important events, revolutions and interaction of different forces in the surrounding countries, especially when these happenings pertain to a neighbour belonging to the same faith and race. It would, therefore, not be proper for us to limit our enquiry to India alone; we shall have to run the eye over to the entire world of Islam, particularly the neighbouring Muslim countries. India may not have had political relations with such countries, but religious, cultural and intellectual connexions did exist and whatever was in the wind there must

have had its repercussions here."[1]

In any discussion of the reformative efforts of Shāh Waliullah it would be all the more necessary to keep this historical principle in view for obvious reasons. Hijaz had an important role in his educational and intellectual development since he had spent more than a year[2] in that land studying *hadīth* under the well-known scholar of his time, Shaikh Abu Tāhir Muhammad b. Ibrāhīm Kurdi, who had imparted instruction to numerous savants of *hadīth* hailing from neighbouring countries. Shāh Waliullah came into contact with the Arab and non-Arab scholars of the two holy cities Hijaz was then a part of the great Ottoman Empire and the local administration was in the hands of the Makkan elite who ruled the country as representatives of the Caliph. Apart from *haj* which caused the convergence of scholars from every part of the Islamic world, the two holy cities, especially Medina was then a centre of learning for *hadīth* attracting both learners and scholars from far off countries. The two holy cities were representative of the entire Islamic world from where one could form an estimate of the intellectual and educational, moral, cultural and political state of the Muslim countries as well as their attainments and failures, their literati and schoolmen, the revivalist movements of different countries, the undercurrents of disintegrative forces and even the webs of intrigues in them. One could feel there the pulse of the Islamic world and hear the sounds of its heart-beat. A man so sapient and well-disposed towards Muslims, who was being groomed for the great task of revival and renovation of God's religion, must have taken maximum advantage of the opportunity in determining his future course of action.

India had been under political tutelage of the Central Asiatic people belonging to the Turanian and Afghani stock for several centuries when their successive waves injected a new life-blood to the country's administrative and military structure. Whenever the ruling circles in India showed the signs of fatigue or infirmity, a fresh and vigorous fighting force entered India through Khaibar or Bolan Pass and since the new-comers subscri-

bed to the same faith (Islam), the same sect, *(ahl-sunnat wal-jamā'at)*, the same law *(shari'ah)*, the same language (Turkish or Persian) and the same culture (a mixture of Arab, Iranian, Turkish and Indian cultures), they imparted a new lease of life to the socio-political set up already existing in this country.

It should also not be forgotten that after Babur's conquest of India and the establishment of Mughal rule in this country, some of the important provinces of Afghānistān like Kābul and Qandhār came to included in the great Muslim Empire of India whose frontiers extended upto Bālā Hissār. It was during the life-time of Shāh Waliullah that Nādir Shāh of Iran attacked Delhi and the ruler of Qandhār, Ahmad Shāh Abdāli made several attempts to subdue this country. The latter ultimately shattered the united strength of the Marhatas in 1174/1761 at Panipat and changed the course of events in this country. He provided an opportunity to the decaying Mughal Empire to consolidate its power and the Muslim society, particularly its nobility to reform itself; both of which, however, proved unequal to the task and failed to avail of the opportunity made available to them. All these happenings pertain to the life-time of Shāh Waliullah, or, correctly speaking, the latter event came to pass through the efforts of Shāh Waliullah. Both these invaders belonged to the same region of Afghānistān and Irān, and hence the political and social developments of this region cannot be ignored in discussing either the socio-political conditions of India during the twelfth century of Islamic era or the events pertaining to the life-time of Shāh Waliullah.

Iran's Social and Cultural Impact on India

Just as India was profoundly influenced politically by Turkistān and Afghānistān ever since the fifth century A. H., the impact of Irān had continued to be felt in its educational, literary, cultural and intellectual spheres. Iran's literary style in prose and poetry, its mystic orders, its curriculum and educational system as well as the text-books compiled there exerted a strong influence on India. The process became more potent

after Humayun's re-capture of the country with the Iranian assistance. During the reign of Akbar, India became totally dependent on Iran for its system of education, the curriculum followed in the educational institutions and even the standard of education, particularly in the field of logic and philosophy after Amīr Fathullah Shīrāzi and Hakīm 'Ali Gilāni's emigration to India. The intellectual and cultural sway of Iran was so complete over India that we cannot overlook the happenings of Iran in our historical survey of India pertaining to that period.

Importance of Ottoman Caliphate

We can also not close our eyes to the great Turkish Empire (which had been donning the mantle of caliphate since the beginning of the tenth century A. H.) whose seat of authority lay far beyond India in the central Asia and Europe but which included almost all the Arab countries (Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Najd, Hijaz and a greater part of North Africa) in its dominion. Being a great power of the day as well as the protector of the Haram at Makkah and other sacred places, and a successor to the caliphate, it was held as the power representing Islam and enjoyed the esteem of Muslims all over the world who naturally took a keen interest in its affairs. Shāh Waliullah possessing a long-suffering heart and breadth of vision, and also a deep insight into Islamic history, could not have overlooked the Ottoman caliphate. He was fully aware of the religious and political importance of the caliphate and its continued existence as an independent power for social health of the Muslims. He wanted to see Muslims politically powerful and influential not merely within their own countries but as a power to reckon with in the international field. How could he ignore the internal forces of cohesion or disintegration and the factors working for the consolidation or erosion of the Ottoman caliphate's political power during his stay for more than a year in one of its most important centres? He must have acquainted himself with the state of affairs in different dominions of the caliphate like Syria and Egypt from the people coming from these countries to Hijaz.

The scholars of Turkey and the nobility of Turkish Empire, as also their leanings and propensities, were exerting influence on the religious and intellectual circles of the caliphate's dependencies and therefore we shall have to cast a glance over the relationship Ottoman caliphate had forged with its neighbouring Christian powers of the West and the political intrigues set afoot by them for the impending upheavals leading to the disintegration of the Turkish power.

Political situation of the World of Islam

We shall first briefly survey the political situation of Islamic world: important events and rise and fall of the Muslim kingdoms and thereafter take stock of its intellectual, religious and moral state of affairs.

Ottoman Caliphate in the Twelfth Century

Shāh Waliullah was born in 1114/1702 and died in 1176/1761. In-between this period five Turkish Kings—Mustafa II (d. 1115/1703), Ahmad III (d. 1143/1730), Mahmūd I (d. 1167/1754), 'Uthmān III (d. 1171/1757) and Mustafa III (1171-1187/1757-1774) wore the crown.

Shāh Waliullah had come of age when Ahmad III, Mahmūd I, 'Uthmān III and Mustafa III were donning the purple but he spent the last five years of his life when Mustafa III held the reins of government.

Mustafa III wielded the sceptre for sixteen years and eight months. It was during his rule that war broke out between the Turks and Russia and the former had to suffer a defeat in 1183/1769. The victory of the Russians was not due to their outstanding performance in the war but could be attributed to certain accidental coincidence and mismanagement of war efforts by the Turks.[3] The Russian Commander, General Elphinston, wanted to attack Constantinople but he was not granted permission. Mustafa Khan, on the other hand, took certain measures to reform and strengthen his armed forces, and was also successful in winning a few battles. Russia offered to make peace with the

Turkey but the conditions offered by it were disgraceful to the Turks. On 3rd Sh'aban 1186/9th November 1772 a Peace Conference was held at Bucharest in Rumania (ten years after the death of Shāh Waliullah), but the Turkish Empire rejected the demands made by the Russians and decided to renew the hostilities. Russians were put to rout so badly that when Turkish forces approached Bazar Jaq (now called Tobulkhin) they found the entire city deserted by its inhabitants. Historian Hemer is on record that the Turkish troops found 'pots on fire in which meat was being cooked'. Sultan Mustafa III died on 8th Dhi Q'ada, 1187/21st January, 1774. Historians have nothing but praise for his zeal for justice and public weal. He got a number of educational institutions and mystical hospices established during his rule.[4]

Shāh Waliullah was a young man when printing presses were set up in different parts of Turkish Empire, the first of these being in Constantinople. It was also the period when the movement launched by Shaikh Muhammad b. 'Abdul Wahhāb (1115-1206/1703-1792) gained ground in Najd and Hijaz.[5] 'Ali Bey (popularly known as Shaikh-ul-Balad) gradually consolidated his hold over Egypt during the reign of 'Uthman III. He conspired with the Admiral commanding the Russian fleet stationed in the Mediterranian Sea to help him with arms and ammunitions to make Egypt independent of Turkish rule. 'Ali Bey succeeded in gaining control over Gaza, Nablus, Quds, Yafa and Damascus. He was making preparations to advance towards Anatuliya when one of his Memluk Commanders, Muhammad Bey (also known as Babi-ul-Zahab) raised the banner of revolt against 'Ali Bey with the result that he had to return to Egypt whe c he suffered a defeat. The ensuing disorder and rebellion resulted in the bombardment of Beirut by the Russian warships which destroyed three hundred houses. In Muharram 1187/March, 1773 the forces of 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey fought pitched battles. 'Ali Bey was defeated and taken prisoner. 'Ali Bey who died of wounds sustained in the battle, was beheaded and his head along with those of four Russian Commanders were presented to the

Turkish viceroy Khalīl Pāshā who sent them on to Constantinople. Turkish rule was once again restored over Egypt.

Hijaz

Sultan Mahmūd I (1143-1167/1730-1754) was the reigning sovereign when Shāh Waliullah reached Hijaz and stayed there in the two holy cities for over a year. The viceroy of Turkish Caliph in Hijāz, then known as Amīr of Hijāz, was Muhammad b. 'Abdullah[6] b. Sa'eed b. Zayd b. Muhsin al-Hasani (d. 1169/1756) who had been raised to governorship of Hijāz[7] after the death of his father in 1143/1730. His rule was marked by family dissensions and internal strife. His uncle Mas'ūd b. Sa'eed forced Muhammad b. 'Abdullah to relinquish the charge of Hijaz in his favour in 1145/1732 but Muhammad b. 'Abdullah regained the Amirship after a year though for a short period only. Mas'ūd b. Sa'eed thereafter retained governorship of Hijaz till his death.[7] He is stated to be a prudent ruler endowed with qualities of statemanship and was able to maintain law and order in Hijaz.[8]

Insecurity of wayfaring, depredations by the Bedouins and general lawlessness in Arabia during the middle of the twelfth century A. H. are vividly portrayed in the chronicles and travel accounts of haj pilgrims of the time. These chaotic conditions were occasioned by the region being located at a remote distance from Constantinople, the centre of the Turkish Empire, the policy of non-interference pursued by the Ottoman caliphate in the internal affairs of Hijaz, high regard for the nobility of Makkah who were treated as descendants of the holy Prophet, complaisance for the Arabs in general and hereditary rule of one family over Hijaz for the last several hundreds of years. There cannot be any doubt that Shāh Waliullah would have taken notice of the disorderly conditions in Hijaz, observed the family feuds for gaining hold upon the government of the region as well as weaknesses of administrative machinery and kept himself abreast of the undesirable events of 1145/1732, which would have more probably taken place during his stay in Hijāz. He

must have drawn his own conclusions about the lack of moral sense and discipline among the people there.

Yemen

The pattern of government in Yemen was almost similar to that of Hijaz. It was politically a part of the Turkish Empire and its governor was appointed by the Caliph but the regency of the country was supplemented by another institution known as *Imāmat* which had been in existence there since the middle of the third century A.H. Normally the Imāms were Saiyids belonging to the Zaidi sect,[9] on whose hands the people of Yemen used to take the pledge of fidelity. The Imāms had to be well-versed in religion, particularly their own school of jurisprudence in which they were regarded as the final authority. Yemen was made a part of Turkish Empire during the reign of Sultan Sulaimān Qanūnī b. Yā'ūz-Salīm, when As-Saiyid al-Mutahhir (b. al-Imām Sharaf-ud-din d. 980/1572) was the ruler and Imām of Yemen. As-Saiyid al-Mutahhir fought against the Turkish Commander Sinān Pāshā and lost the battle[10] but the Turks allowed the office of Imām to continue with a large measure of internal autonomy as in Hijaz. Al-Imām al-Mansūr b'illāh al-Husain b. al-Mutawakkil 'alallāh Qasim b. Husain (1139/1726-1161/1748) was the Imām of Yemen when Shāh Waliullah visited Hijaz. Although Yemen had been ruled by the Zaidis for quite sometime, the majority of the people belonged to the Shafi'ite sect of the Sunnites. Yemen had also been an important centre for study of *hadīth* during the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. Yemen gave birth to such eminent scholars of *hadīth* as Muhammad b. Isma'il al-Amir (d. 1142/1729) during the twelfth century who wrote the *Sublus-Salām*. Another great scholar of hadith was Muhammad b 'Ali As-Shaukāni (d. 1255/1839) the author of *Nail al-Awtār*. Shāh Waliullah's presence in the neighbouring Hijaz must have afforded him an opportunity to study the writings of Yemeni scholars.

Iran

It was the time when Iran was being ruled, for the last two

hundered years by the Safawids who, in accordance with the inexorable law of nature, were then showing signs of decline. As Ibn Khaldūn says once a ruling dynasty is striken in years it never regains its vigour again. Its weakness was put to advantage by the neighbouring Afghānistan whose ambitious ruler Mahmūd Khan of Ghilzai attacked Iran in 1134/1721. Isfahān was captured and Husain Shāh of Iran was taken captive by the Afghans who wanted to conquer the entire country but being small in numbers it was not possible for them to maintain their hold on the whole country. Mahmūd Khan died in 1137/1724 after holding the sceptre for thirty years. Disorder prevailed in the country during the rule of his successor Ashraf Khan. Peter the Great of Russia attacked northern Iran and annexed several districts. Shāh of Iran was also taken captive but his heir apparent Prince Tahmasp was fortunate in having a courtier who was of humble origin but had the courage and capability of those who carve out a kingdom for themselves. This was the deliverer of Iran, Nādir Shāh Afshār.

Nādir Shāh Afshār

Nādir restored the ancestral throne to Tahmasp but the Safawid dynasty was crumbling and nothing could put new life into it. The whole country was sinking in anarchy and chaos. Nādir availed himself of the situation and raised a formidable force under his command. His zeal and courage recalled Iranians to life who helped him to take the reins into his hand. He turned out the Afghāns from Iran in 1143/1730 and forced the Russians, after checking their advance at the Caspian Sea in 1146/1733, to concede him a treaty on favourable terms. Nādir blocked up the Arabs on Iran's western frontiers and obliged the Turks to retreat from its northern region. He captured several dominions of the old Iranian empire and by 1148/1735 secured recognition of Iran's frontiers as they had been in the time of Murād IV.

Giving a brief description of Nādir Shāh's achievements, William Ā. Langer writes in his *Encyclopaedia of World History*:

"He accepted the throne on the condition that the Persians renounce the Shia heresy. He himself, being a Turk by race, was also a Sunnite. But he never succeeded in making orthodoxy accepted by the Persians. Nādir and his generals reduced Baluchistan and Balkh in 1737. Nādir thereupon proceeded in 1738 to invade India. Kabul, Peshawar and Lahore were taken in 1739, a large army of Mughal emperor was defeated at Karnal, near Delhi. Delhi was taken and a tremendous massacre[11] followed Nādir left the Mughal emperor on his throne, but levied an indemnity of almost half a billion dollars and took all the territory north and west of Indus. Nādir overran Bukhara and Khwarezm (Khiva) in 1740. This marked the greatest extent of his dominion and at the same time a turning point in his career. Nādir was a great soldier, but he lacked real statesmanship and administrative ability. His efforts to stamp out Shi'ism resulted in growing unrest,[12] and the need for suppressing discontent made the Shāh more ruthless and cruel. In the end he ruined the country by his huge exactions and despotic exploitation. Nādir was assassinated by one of his tribesman in 1747."[13]

A period of anarchy followed during which the succession was hotly disputed. Nādir's nephew 'Ali Quli 'Ādil Shāh 1747-48) ascended the throne and executed all his family members save prince Shāh Rukh Mirza who was then 14 years of age. 'Ādil Shāh was deposed by his brother Ibrahīm within a year of his accession to the throne and blinded but Ibrahīm's forces rebelled. The generals of Ibrahīm defeated him in a battle, took him captive and then put him to sword. 'Ādil Shāh was also slain. Thereafter Karīm Khan of Zand dynasty succeeded in maintaining himself in power for 29 years from 1164/1750 to 1193/1779. Karim Khan who had a strong following in the south, Shiraz being his capital, was a just and benevolent ruler during whose reign the country was enabled to recover from the ravages of warfare His death was lamented by the Persians. The Zand dynastry also came to an end after a succession of weak sovereigns ascending the throne after Karim Khan. Lutf 'Ali was slain in 1209/1794 leaving the throne of Iran to be

occupied by the Qājhārs, but as the period relates to post-Shāh Waliullah era, we need not go into its details.

Ahmad Shāh Abdāli of Afghanistan

Afghanistan had been divided by Iran India and the Khans of Bukhara before the outset of eighteenth century Qandhar gained independence in 1706 but it was captured by Nādir Shāh in 1737 who extended his dominion upto the western part of India.

Ahmad Khan Abdāli, an Afghan, was brought before Nādir Shāh as a prisoner of war. Impressed by his abilities, Nādir took him as a personal attendant. Ahmad Khan won the confidence of Nādir Shāh and was given the charge of important assignments. After Nādir Shāh was assassinated, the Afghans proceeded towards Qandhar and chose Ahmad Khan as their leader and began to address him as Ahmad Shāh. He belonged to the Durrani (Saddozai) branch of Abdāli tribe and hence he chose to be called as Durr-i-daurān. His family is accordingly known as Durrāni.

Ahmad Shāh established Durrāni kingdom in Afghanistan with Meshhed in eastern Iran, Baluchistan, the Punjab and Kashmir in India forming part of his empire. He was, as a matter of fact, no less remarkable among soldier-statesmen of the eighteenth century who had distinguished themselves by carving out an empire for themselves by the dint of their own genius. He was a benevolent and just ruler possessing an indomitable ambition. Like Mahmūd of Ghazna he made several attacks on India between 1747 to 1769. His military ability, religious zeal, regard for the learned and nobility of character have been acknowledged by his contemporaries. He was successful after a long time, in welding diverse political entities of Afghanistan into a powerful empire.[14]

Ahmad Shāh Abdāli died in 1186 A.H. (23rd October 1772) in Qandhar. Unfortunately he was not succeeded by a capable ruler as it so often happens with conquerors and founders of empires. Timūr Shāh ascended the throne but he lacked the

qualities of head and heart possessed by his illustrious father with the result that by the end of his twenty years' rule the newly built empire began to show signs of decay. Timūr died in 1793 and soon thereafter, during the reign of his son Mahmūd, power was usurped by the Barakzai tribe which continued to hold it until kingship was overthrown in Afghanistan in 1975.[15]

Religious and Intellectual Situation

After this brief survey of the political conditions of the Islamic world it appears necessary to cast a glance at the religious thought and intellectual movements of the time since these have a greater bearing on the life and work of Shāh Waliullah.

Scholars of the Twelfth Century

A careful examination of the history of intellectual endeavour by the Muslims would reveal that unlike several other peoples, their educational and intellectual movements as well as literary activities have never been dependent nor even linked with the rise and fall of political powers of the time. We find several peoples showing the signs of intellectual decay with the decline of their political power. It seems they lose their self-confidence and intellectual vigour in the absence of political support and encouragement.

This process has been quite different with the Muslims who have produced, not unoften, master spirits during the period of their political decay and acute internal disorder. The Mongols had completely destroyed the intellectual centres of the Islamic world during the seventh century A.H. and the literary activities seemed to be touching the all-time low after the destruction of Baghdad. But we come across such giants of learning as Shaikh-ul-Islam Taqi-ud-din Ibn Daqīq al-'Id (d. 702/1302) in the field of *hadith*, a theological scholastic like 'Ala-ud-din al-Bāji (d. 714/1314), the great savant Shaikh-ul-Islam Ibn Taimiyah (d. 728/1328), the historian Shams-ud-din az-Zahabi (d. 748/1347) and the grammarian Abu Hayyan Nahavi (d. 745/1344) in the opening decades of the eighth century.

The reason is that the craving or desire to serve religion and acquire a deep knowledge of religious sciences is something instinctive—an inborn tendency—in the case of Muslims rather than being dependent on external influences like state patronage. The impulses like achieving the pleasure of God, continuing the mission of the prophets and safeguarding religion from corruption have continued to be potent even during the times of political unrest, decay of most powerful Muslims powers like the Ottoman caliphate and hot contests by different contenders for taking the helm of state into their hands in different countries including even Hijaz, the centre of Islam. We find religious scholars in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Hijaz, Yemen, Iran and India, during periods of political instability, devoting their energies to teaching and preaching or other literary pursuits and the mystics of Islam engaged in attaining perfection of spirit and purification of the self. This is why we find, during this period also, several scholars and godly souls outshining their predecessors.

Let us consider, for instance, the endeavour in the field of *hadīth*. Abul Hasan al-Samadi al-Kabīr (d. 1138/1726) continued to teach the subject for a long time in the holy mosque and wrote *Al-Hawāmish-al-Sittah* which is the well-known commentary on the six authentic works of *hadīth*. Muhammad Hayāt Sindi (d. 1163/1750) is another eminent scholar of the same period. In Syria Shaikh Isma'il al-'Ajlūni also known as Al-Jirahi (d. 1162/1749) was deemed as an authority on the subject and his work *Kashf-al-Khifa wa-Muzil-al-bās 'Ammash-tahara min-al-Ahādīth-'ala-al-Sunnatan Nās* in two volumes is an encyclopaedic work delineating the authentic and weak *ahādīth*. The book shows his comprehensive knowledge of the sources of even those reports which were considered as weak or were popular among the masses but with little information to throw light on their origin.

The two holy cities of Makkah and Medina were the great centres of *hadīth* where Shaikh Abu Tahir al-Kaurāni al-Kurdi and Shaikh Hasan al-Ujaimi used to deliver lectures on the subject. Sulaiman b. Yahya al-Ahdal (d. 1197/1783) was the

most respected savant of *hadīth* in Yemen during that period. Muhammad b. Ahmad as-Safārīni (d. 1188/1773) was also an authority on *hadīth* and *usūl* who wrote *Ad-Durr al-Masnu'āt fil Ahādīth al-Mauzū'āt*. Yemen had another respected scholar of *hadīth* Al-Amīr Muhammad b. Isma'il al-Hasani al-San'ani (d. 1142/1729) who wrote two valuable commentaries. His *Subul-al-Salām* is a commentary on *Bulūgh al-Marām* and the other work known as *Tauzīh al-Afkār* is an exegesis of *Tanqīh al-Anzār*. We also find Muhammad Sa'eed al-Sunbul (d. 1175/1761) whose *Al-Awā'il-al-Sunbuliya fi Awail-i-Kutub al-Hadīth* is held as a manual by the teachers of *hadīth*. Yet another scholar of the time Muhammad b. 'Abdul Bāqi al-Zarqāni (d. 1122/1710) was held in such a high esteem that several writers have paid him tribute as "the last scholar of *hadīth* in Egypt."[16]

Shaikh 'Abdul Ghani al-Nāblīsi (d. 1143/1730) was the most celebrated scholar of the time whose depth of knowledge, number of disciples and facile pen had earned him the title of the Great Teacher. His works are reported to be as many as two hundred and twenty-three. It was also the time when Isma'il Haqqi (d. 1127/1715) wrote the famous commentary *Rūh-al-Bayān fi-Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*. Among the scholars of Baghdad 'Abdullah b. Husain As-Suwaidi (d. 1174/1760) was a prolific writer.[17]

Jamia Azhar of Cairo, Jamia Zaitūniya of Tunisia and Jamia al-Qarwin of Fās were the three well-known institutions of learning but we also find the names of Madrasa Hāfiziyah, al-Madrasata al-Shilliyah and al-Madrasata al-'Azrawia mentioned in the chronicles of the time. The historians also refer to the Naqshbandi, Khilwati, Shāzili, Qādiri and Rifā'i mystical orders whose adherents were spread all over the Muslim world from Turkey to Indonesia.

Literary taste and Spiritual atmosphere

The educated class was interested in literary creations specially poetry, polemies, enigmatical anecdotes and funny

stories but hardly anything unique or outstanding in these fields has been left by it. The literary style was marked by empty rhetoric and rhythmic verbosity. Turkish cultural traditions seem to be predominent in the intellectual life of the era as no eminent academician or thinker is to be found during the period.[18] The four volumes of *Silk al-Durr* by Murādi abound in eulogical verses and lyrical poetry while other contemporary works show an inclination towards description of miracles of the saints and similar popular beliefs. The scholars of the dependent territories used to visit Constantinople for taking up civil and military posts under the caliphate. The main components of the then curriculum were logic, mathematics, syntax and elegance, jurisprudence and *hadīth*. Amulets and charms were popular. A few scholars had even versified the juridical code of *Qadūri*. Several Arab scholars were conversant with Persian as well as Turkish since the latter was official language of the empire. The people in Syria had been more influenced by Turkish modes and manners for a number of Turk scholars had taken up residence there and they were able to speak Arabic fluently. It was deemed a great honour to teach in the Jamia Amwi of Damascus. Several scholars and mystics lectured on *Fatuhāt-i-Makkiyah* and *Fasūs-al-Hakam*. *Sharh Jāmi* and *Mukhtasar al-Ma'āni* were the two other popular manuals of study. Mysticism had a great appeal for the masses and even the religious scholars and teachers of *hadith* like Shaikh 'Abdul Ghani al-Nāblisi and others subscribed to the prevailing mystic taste for the intuitive concept of Unity of Being.[19]

Popularity of Speculative Sciences in Iran

Ismail Safawi (905/930-1499/1524) had founded the great Safawaid dynasty in Iran and taken vigorous steps to convert the Iranians to his creed. The Sunnite faith was almost wiped out from the country. Iran had been the birth-place of such renowned scholars of *hadith* as Imām Muslim, Imām Abu Dāwūd, Imām Nasāi and Imām Ibn Majah and eminent scholars of the stature of Abu Is'hāq Shirāzi, Imāmul Harmayn Abul Ma'āli

'Abdul Malik Juwaini and Imām Abu Hāmid Al-Ghazzali, but it had severed its connexion with *hadīth*, jurisprudence and other religious disciplines. The Iraninan sovereigns were generally well-disposed towards philosophy and other speculative sciences while Shi'ism had a soft corner for *a'itazāl* and its philosophical thought. The well-known scholar, physician and mathematician Khwāja Nasīr-ud-din Tūsi (d. 672/1273), who wrote *Sharh Ishārāt Ibn Sina* was a Mutazalite Shia and a close counsellor of Halaku.[20] It was because of his influence, exerted through state patronage, that philosophy, mathematics and other speculative and physical sciences became popular in the entire Mongol possessions which included Turkistan, Iran and Iraq. The reign of second Safawid ruler Shāh Tahamāsp (d. 984/1577) saw the rise of another illuminist scholar and philosopher Mīr Ghiyāth-ud-din Mansūr[21] (d. 948/1541) who established Madrasah Mansūriyah of Shirāz and enjoyed the patronage of Shāh Tahmāsp. His disciples as well as those subscribing to his school of thought spread his teachings in India. One of his disciples Amīr Fath Ullah Shīrazi (d. 997/1589) came to India in the closing decades of the tenth century; he was warmly received by the Mughal emperor Akbar. Āzād Bilgrāmi claims that Fath Ullah Shīrazi brought the works of Sadr-ud-din Shīrāzi, Mīr Ghiyāth-ud-din Mansūr and Fāzil Mirza Jān (d. 944/1537) to India and introduced them into the curriculum of the country.

Mīr Bāqar Dāmād (d. 1041/1631) emerged as a dominating figure during the middle of the eleventh century, whose brilliant exposition of intellectualism made his style and thought acceptable to the educated class from Iran to India. He occupied an honourable place in the court of Shāh 'Abbās Safawi (d. 1037/1628) and his *Al-Ufaq al-Mubīn* was taken as the best example of imaginative writing. Not long after him Sadr-ud-din Shirāzi (d. 1050/1640) made a mark as an illuminist scholar and liberal-minded philosopher. His two works *Al-Asfār-al-Arba'a* and *Sharh Hidāyat-al-Hikmah* (also known as *Sidra*)[22] achieved a world-wide fame. The natural disposition of the Iranians

which easily runs riot completely endorsed the sophistry and windy quibbling of Sadr-ud-din Shirāzi. His syllogisms consisting of assumed prepositions created absorbing dilemmas but were actually worthless in content. Still, they gained a complete mastery over the educational system of all the Muslim countries during the course of the tenth to the twelfth century and established ascendancy of speculative sciences. All that was left for the pedagogues and students was to interpret the abstruse thought and pompous prolixity of these masters or to write commentaries on their works. The least deviation from this universal norm or to question their validity was taken as a sign of one's ignorance and stupidity.

This intellectual trend of Iran was bound to influence Afghanistan, particularly Herat which lay in the west of the country close to Iran. A scholar, Qazi Muhammad Aslam Harawi (d. 1061/1651) by name, drank deep in the philosophy and logic of Iranian masters while his illustrious son Qazi Mīr Zāhid alias Mīr Zahid (d. 1101/1690) developed these to the pink of perfection He spent a greater part of his life in India writing *Sharh Mawāqif*. *Sharh Tahzīb* and *Risālah Qutbiyah*. The three commentaries known as *Zawāhid-i-Thalātha* became popular text books in the country. Notwithstanding his mastery in the speculative sciences, Mīr Zahid was not well-versed in *fiqh* and *hadith* and other religious disciplines. He was not able to teach even *Sharh Waqayih*, a book of law prescribed for the intermediate standard. Shāh 'Abdul 'Aziz writes in one of his letters that "one of the nobles used to take lessons in *Sharh Waqāyah* from Mīr Zāhid but (as he did not consider himself adequately versed in *fiqh*) he never taught his disciple until my grandfather (Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm who took lessons in speculative sciences from him) had arrived."[23] On the other hand Mīr Zāhid's proficiency in speculative sciences was so perfect that Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz says: "I hold dear the writings of Mirza Jān, but those of Ākhund are dearest to me."[24]

Iran was exerting influence not only on Afghanistan and India but also on Syria and Iraq where the scholars of speculative

sciences were admired and the subject was gradually introduced in their educational curriculum.

Morals, Culture and Beliefs

Proficient scholars and experts were, in those days, to be found in all branches of arts and sciences, different mystic orders were popular, the people showed a keenness to learn and act upon the teachings of the holy Prophet, a great number of administrators were pious and virtuous, the governments tried to enforce *shari'ah* as the law of the land, mosques and madrasas were full of devotees and learners, the masses were respectful of Islam and its teaching as well as religious scholars and masters who had attained spiritual perfection, and they also exhibited their zeal for Islam, yet there was an all-pervading stagnation showing signs of general decay. Individual morals and social behaviour evinced traces of usages and practices borrowed from the non-Muslims. The rulers were autocrats and the governments were despotic. The nobles and the rich had everywhere adopted the vices of the prodigals and given a free rein to their desires. The social set-up had given birth to a class of people who lived by flattery or as a parasite without doing any work. Superstitious beliefs and overcredulousness in certain sections of the masses had overshadowed the pure and simple creed of *tawheed*, Oneness of God, manifesting itself in excessive veneration of the sain's and shrines which often bordered upon the cult of the polytheists.

An American writer, Lothrop Stoddard has in his *New World of Islam* given a graphic description of the then world of Islam which may be deemed as a bit exaggerated by some, but is factually correct on the whole. He brings out certain aspects of Muslim society which are generally overlooked by those who are its members, but they catch the attention of one forming an estimate of that society from outside. However, it would be worthwhile to cite his observation here without subscribing entirely to his view of the then state of affairs. He writes:

> "By the eighteenth century the Moslem world had sunk to the lowest depth of its decrepitude. Nowhere were

then any signs of healthy vigour; everywhere were stagnation and decay. Manners and morals were alike execrable. The last vestiges of Saracenic culture had vanished in a barbarous luxury of the few and an equally barbarous degradation of the multitude. Learning was virtually dead, the few universities which survived had fallen into dreary decay and languishing in poverty and neglect. Government had become despotism tempered with anarchy and assassination. Here and there a major despot like the Sultan of Turkey or the Indian 'Great Mughal' maintained some semblance of state authority, albeit provincial pashas were for ever striving to erect independent governments, based, like their masters, on tyranny and extortion. The pashas, in turn, strove ceaselessly against unruly local chiefs and swarms of brigands who infested the countryside. Beneath this sinister hierarchy groaned the people, robbed, bullied and ground into dust. Peasant and townsmen had alike lost all incentive to labour or initiative, and both agriculture and the trade had fallen to the lowest level compatible with bare survival.

As for religion, it was as decadant as everything else. The austere monotheism of Mohammad had become overlaid with a rank growth of superstition and puerile mysticism. The mosques stood unfraquented and ruinous, deserted by the ignorant multitude, which, decked out in amulets, charms and rosaries, listened to squalid fakirs or ecstatic dervishes, and went on pilgrimage to the tombs of 'holy men', worshipped as saints and 'intercessors' with that Allah who had become too remote a being for direct devotion of these benighted souls. As for the moral precepts of the Koran, they were ignored or defied. Wine-drinking and opium-eating were well nigh

universal, prostitution was rampant, and the most degrading vices flaunted naked and unashmed."[25]

Notes and References :—

1. *Saviours of Islamic Spirit,* Lucknow, 1983, Vol. III, p. 12.
2. Shāh Waliullah arrived in Hijaz by the end of 1143/1730 and left the country in the beginning of 1145/1731 after performing two *hajs*..
3. For details see *Tārikh al-Daulatil 'Alyata al-'Uthmania* by Mohammad Farid Bek al-Mahāmi, Beirut.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 329-340.
5. Shortly thereafter Saud Ibn 'Abdul 'Aziz (1163-1229/1748-1814) established his rule in 1218/1803 over Hijaz and a greater part of Arabia with the help of upsurge created by the new movement. In 1234/1819 Khadiv Muhammad Ali, the governor of Egypt, recaptured Arabia and restored Turkish suzerainty. Amir 'Abdullah b. Sa'ud b. 'Abdul 'Azīz was sent to Constantinople where he was ultimately slain.
6. Certain historians give his name as Muhammad b. 'Abdul Ilāh, perhaps as a mark of respect to the holy Prophet.
7. The Amirs of Makkah (also known as *Ashrāf* and selected from the Hasani family of the town) had held the governorship since the beginning of the fourth century. The first Sharif of Makkah was appointed by Abbasid Caliph Al-Mutililläh (334-363/945-974). The Memluk kings of Egypt used to appoint the Sharif of Makkah until Sultan Salim extended his dominion to Syria and Egypt. Sultan Salim confirmed the then Sharif of Makkah As-Saiyid Barakāt, and then his son Saiyid Abu Nami. The system continued until Husain, the Sharif of Makkah rebelled against the Ottoman caliphate in Sh'aban 1334/June 1916. He was expelled from Hijaz in January 1926 when Sultan Ibn Saud captured Hijaz.
8. *Al-'Ālam,* Vol. VIII, pp. 111-112; *Tadyīl Shifa al-Gharām al-Akhbar-al-Bakad al-Harām,* Vol. II, pp. 309/310.
9. Muhammad Abu Zahra writes in the *Tārikh al-Mazāhib al Islāmiyah* that among the Shi'ite sects *Zaidis* are moderate in their beliefs and comparatively nearer to the *Sunnis*. They have not elevated the Imāms to the position of prophets and hold them only as enjoying paramountcy among the followers of the Prophet. They

do not consider the companions of the Prophet as heretics nor hold the view that the Prophet had nominated any particular person as Imām. In their view the Prophet had only indicated the characteristics of the Imām which were found in 'Ali. According to Abu Zahra the founder of this sect, Imām Zaid b. Imām Zainul 'Ābidīn, acknowledged the first three Caliphs as Imāms and held their caliphate to be valid (pp. 47/49).

10. For details see *Al-Barq-al-Yamāin fial-Fath al-Uthmāni* by Qutb-ud-din Nahrwāli Patni.

11. Frasher says that the slaughter lasted from 8 a. m. to 3 p. m. and that the number of slain was 120,000, though some place it as high as 150,000. Scott's estimate of 8000 is certainly too low and it is not improbable that Wolsely Haig who gives the figure of 30,000 errs in the same direction. (*Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 361).

12. It is difficult to subscribe to the view put forth by certain historians, both Europeans and Muslims, that Nādir was a Sunnite or that he tried to stamp out Shi'ism from Iran. Nādir might have taken certain steps as a political strategy which gave rise to this speculation but during his stay at Delhi he never did or said anything to suggest that he was a Sunnite or that he wanted to propagate that faith in Iran.

13. William A. Langer, *The New Pictorial Encyclopedia of World History*, New York, (1972), Vol. I, p. 547.

14. More of these details will be found in a subsequent section dealing with Ahmad Shāh Abdāli.

15. For political conditions of Afghanistan see p. 139 ff, of *Saiyid Ahmad Shaheed, His Life and Mission* by Mohiuddin Ahmad. It was the Barakzai ruler with whom the Saiyid had to deal with. The last king of Afghanistan, Zāhir Shāh, was deposed in 1975.

16. Muhammad b. 'Ali ash-Shaukāni's *Al-Badr-al-Tal'e bi Muhāsin min-B'ad al-Qarn-al-Sāb'e* and *Silk-al-Durrfi-'Ayān al-Qarn al-Thāni 'Ushr lil-Murādi* contain detailed accounts on the subject.

17. *Silk-ud-Durr and Al-Badr-al-Tāl'e.*

18. Turks are a martial race interested in practical affairs and administration. During their long rule the few outstanding scholars like Abul Sa'ūd, Tash Kubrazada and Khalifa Chalpi are just exceptions to the common taste of the Turks.

19. *Silk-al-Durr.*

20. See *Tārikh Ikhbār wa Āthār Khwaja Nasīr-ud-din Tūsi* published by the Tehran University.

21. He wrote a commentary on Shihab-ud-din Suhrawardi Maqtūl's *Hayākil al-Nūr* under the title of *Ishrāq Hayākil al-Nūr*.

22. *Sidra* came to be included in the curriculum in India during the eleventh century of Hijrah. No student was deemed to be a graduate without attaining proficiency in this book.

23. *Malfuzāt*, of Shāh Abdul Aziz, No. 82.

24. *Ibid.*, No. 83.

25. Lothrop Stoddard, *The New World of Islam*, London, 1921, pp. 20-21.

II

India

Political Condition

Shāh Waliullah was born in 1114/1703, four years before Aurangzib's death in 1118/1707. Of what we know of the history of Indian sub-continent it cannot be gainsaid that he was the most powerful sovereign of the greatest kingdom that had ever existed in India after Ashoka the Great. Sir Jadunath Sirkar writes in the *Cambridge History of India* that his 'empire embraced, in the north, Kashmir and all Afghanistan from Hindukush southwards to a line thirty-six miles south of Ghazni; on the west coast it stretched in theory to the northern frontier of Goa and inland to Belgaum and the Tungbhadra river. Thereafter, the boundry passed west to east in a disputed and ever shifting line through the centre of Mysore, dipping south-eastwards to the Coleroon river (north of Tanjore). In the north-east Chittagong and Monas river (west of Gauhati) divided it from Arakan and Assam[1].". Other historians, too, acknowledge that since the ancient period to the rise of British raj in India, no kingdom had held sway on such a vast territory.[2] Assam, which had always maintained its separate ethnic, cultural and religious identity, was, for the first time, conquered by Mir Jumla for the Mughals.[3] Aurangzib has been criticized by certain non-Muslim historians, Europeans and Hindus, for his zeal for Islam[4] but almost all are agreed that he was a ideal person in many ways

and was unrivalled in sound judgement, courage, firm determination, administrative ability and simple habits. Pious in his personal life, his contemporaries called him a "Darvish clad in the Imperial purple."[5]

Achievements of Aurangzib

With unbending resolve Aurangzib applied himself, soon after ascending the throne, to root out the un-Islamic legacy of Akbar's rule and to eliminate the influence of Shi'ites (who had entrenched themselves in Deccan and hence he had to devote a considerable part of his time and energy there). The pre-Islamic culture of Iran had made a deep impact on India, during the rule of Akbar, and was still continuing in the shape of Iranian Calendar, the festival of Nauroz and similar other customs and usages. Aurangzib interdicted all these practices, appointed *muhtasibs* (censors of public morals) as required by the *shari'ah*, to check the people from indulging in impermissible and evil conduct, discontinued uncanonical and illegal exactions (*abwab*), forbade music and dancing at his court and gave up the former custom of the Emperor giving a *darshan* to the populance, appointed Qazis and gave them powers to decide all cases in accordance with *shari'ah* and took personal interest in the compilation of the *Fatawa-i-'Alamgiri*, the greatest digest of Muslim law, which has been acknowledged as the most authentic and comprehensive digest even in the Muslim countries like Egypt, Syria and Turkey.[6] He discontinued the un-Islamic court etiquette of *kornish* and *adab* and instituted, in their place, the Islamic way of salutation. In the words of Iqbal, succincty expressed in a verse, Aurangzib was:

A gallant lover of *tauhid* he was,
An Ibrahim in this idol house.

Apart from the reformatory steps taken by Aurangzib, some of which were of a revolutionary nature and also of lasting value for the conservation of Islam in India, he possessed those qualities of enlightened kingship which were indispensable for the ruler of such a vast kingdom. His high ideals of conduct

and duty and the keen interest he took in every affair of state, big and small, had given him absolute authority over his government. Once he wrote to his father Shahjahan: "I cannot be reproached for inglorious inaction,"[7] and history bears testimony to the truth of his assertion. In reply to the advice tendered by a noble that the Emperor's incessant application to affairs of state might endanger his health, Aurangzib had said : ".....I am sent into the world by Providence to live and labour, not for myself, but for others; that it is my duty not to think of my own happiness, except so far as it is inseparably connected with the happiness of my people.....It was not without reason that our great Sa di emphatically exclaimed:

Cease to be Kings! Oh, cease to be Kings!
Or determine that your dominions shall be
governed only by yourselves."![8]

It was possible only for a man with indomitable will, unshaken resolution, invincible health, sense of responsibility and awe of God to personally supervise the minutest details of the administrative business of such a vast empire. It is really astounding that he paid the same amount of attention to the matters of policy as to measures taken for their execution. During his long sojourn in Deccan he kept himself informed of all events and developments in the remaining part of his kingdom. He was assisted by a large staff of official reporters, called *waki'navis*. with whose aid he was "able to exercise his passion for business, to examine the minute details of administration, and exercise his patronage down to the appointment of the merest clerk."[9] In the midst of his manifold engagements, he had marked out his path of duty and steadfastly pursued it alone with a devotional zeal.

Weak Descendants of Aurangzib

The glorious throne of the great kingdom left by Aurangzib (envisaged by him not as the defender but as the servant of faith), came to be occupied by those who had, it seems, taken a vow that they would redress the mistake committed by Aurangzib in

the preservation of Islam and promulgation of its laws in India. Their actions reflected their opposing tendencies in every direction. Aurangzib had made the empire vast and strong by his diligence, vigour and sense of duty but they tried to atone his sins through their idolence, heedlessness, dependence on intriguing nobles and marry-making. It was a misfortune, not of the Great Mughals alone, but of India and entire Muslim community, that Aurangzib's throne came to be occupied, one after another, by weak and worthless men. As God had willed it, the very first successor of Aurangzib was just his reverse.

During the life-time of Shāh Waliullah (1114-1176/1703-1762) eleven Mughal kings ascended the throne in quick succession. These were :

1. Muhammad Mu'azzam Bahādur Shāh (with the title of Shāh 'Ālam Bahādur Shāh I).
2. Mu'iz-ud-din Jahandār Shāh.
3. Farrukhsiyar Ibn 'Azīm-us-Shān.
4. Nīkūsiyar.
5. Raf'ī-ud-Darajāt Ibn Raf'i-ul-Qadar.
6. Raf ī-ud-Daula Ibn Raf'i-ul-Qadar.
7. Muhammad Shah Ibn Jahan Shāh.
8. Ahmad Shāh Ibn Muhammad Shāh.
9. 'Azīz-ud-din 'Ālamgīr Ibn Jahandār Shāh.
10. Muhiy-us-Sunnah b. Kam Bakhsh b. 'Ālamgir.
11. Shāh 'Ālam Ibn 'Azīz-ud-din.

Eleven kings donned the purple within a brief period of half a century : some of them ruled for ten[10] or a little less than four months[11], some were kings in name only[12], while others remained on the throne just for a few days.[13] We shall mention here the events during the reign of Shāh 'Ālam Bahādur Shāh I. Farrukh Siyar, Muhammad Shāh and Shāh Ālam II which had an impact on later developments in Indian history and the fate of Indian Muslims.

Shāh 'Ālam Bahādur Shāh I (1118-24/1707-12)

He was the eldest son of Aurangzib who ascended the throne

after defeating his brother Muhammad 'Azam. He played at cross-purposes with his father by embracing shi'ite faith which marked not only an antithesis of the state policy and faith of his father but also that of all the earlier Mughal kings, and was even against his own political interest since ninety percent of his Muslim subjects from Bengal to Kabul and Qandhar subscribed to the Sunnite creed. Ghulām Husain Tabātabāi, a Shi'ite historian, has spoken of Bahādur Shāh's, acceptance of the Shia faith, his indulgence in polemics with the Sunni religious scholars, ordering a public profession of 'Ali being the only rightful successor of the Prophet in Friday sermons at Lahore and the edict causing a tumult among the people. He sums up the failure of Bahādur Shāh in these words :

> "The king continued to insist on and to propagate Shi'ite beliefs, kept on discussing the matter with the religious scholars but nothing came out of his endeavours."[14]

The result was that the Muslim masses and army, drawn mostly from the Sunnites, gradually lost the zeal with which they had always supported on Mughals The change in state policy has been marked by non-Muslim historians also. Dr. Satish Chandra writes in the *Party and Politics at the Mughal Court* that "in the realm of policy, the association of the state with religious orthodoxy was considerably weakened."[15] The softness of Bahadur Shāh's fibre prevented him from asserting his will in any matter. According to Sir Jadunath Sarkar "he was incapable of saying no to anybody, and his only idea of statesmanship was to let matters drift and patch up a temporary peace by humouring everybody, without facing issues and saving future trouble by making decisions promptly and courageously."[16] It was during his reign that intrigues began to increase in the court along with the realisation that he was too weak to suppress them. Still the traditions of the dignity of the empire were maintained.

According to Khafi Khan very few monarchs of the times past were equal to Bahādur Shāh in extenuation of faults and forgiveness of offences but such complacency and negligence were

exhibited in the protection of the state and in the management of the country and its government that witty sarcastic people found the date of his accession in the words: *Shāh-i-bekhabar* (the Heedless King).[17]

Tabātabāi, Zakāullah and several other historians state that Bahādur Shāh had grown superstitious towards the end of his life.[18] He died on 19th Muharram 1124/27th February, 1712 reducing the great Mughal Empire within six years of rule, to an state of impotency and bankruptcy.

Farrukh Siyar (1125-31/1713-19)

The Sayyid Brothers Hasan 'Ali (afterwards titled as 'Abdullah Khān Qutub-ul-Mulk) and Husain 'Ali (afterwards Amīr-ul-Umrā-Firūz Jang), who were destined to be remembered in Indian history as the king-makers and the worst examples of royal ingratitude, completely dominated Farrukh Siyar. According to Sir Jadunath Sarkar "Farrukh Siyar was utterly thoughtless, fickle and weak, and devoid of constancy of fidelity to his own promises. Like all weak men he was swayed by the latest adviser, and having resolved to do a thing could never hold it long but soon sank into despair and went back on his undertakings. Constitutionally incapable of governing by his own will and controlling others, he would not trust any able agent, but was easily inspired by a childish suspicion of his ministers and induced to enter into plots for their overthrow. But his cowardice and fickleness made it impossible for any plot to succeed under his leadership, and his instigators had to suffer from vengeance of the fruitlessly offended ministers."[19]

All the state affairs passed into the hands of subordinates. A *bania* (grocer) named Ratan Chand who used to look after Sayyid 'Abdullah's private estates, abused his influence over the sleeply minister to extort large bribes from office seekers as the price of issuing letters of appointment under the imperial seal. He also used to lease the collection of revenue to the highest bidder resulting in rack-renting and the ruine of agriculture. For seven years the State was in a condition of unstable equilib-

rium, and it is not too much to say that Farrukh Siyar prepared for himself the fate which finally overtook him. At last, sickened by constant plotting of Farrukh Siyar, the Sayyid Brothers dragged him down from his throne, bare-headed and bare-footed, and subjected him every moment to blows and vilest abuse. He was imprisoned, starved, blinded, poisoned and strangled to death. The successors of the Great Mughals lost the prestige and the regard their predecessors had enjoyed in the masses.

Muhammad Shāh (1131-1161/1719-48)

Muhammad Shāh occupied the throne for 29 years and 6 months. His reign was a chapter of accidents. It was during his rule that Nādir Shāh invaded India in 1739. Sayyid Brothers had put Muhammad Shāh on the throne and exercised complete domination over him. They were responsible for the abolition of the *jizya* and a appeasing policy towards the Rajputs. They appointed Raja Ratan Chand as Diwan. They were also responsible for formation of a Hindustani Party which included both Hindus and Muslims. The Rajput were the strongest supporters of the Sayyid Brothers on account of their policy of reconciliation.[20] They had rendered the emperor powerless and encouraged Hindus to construct temples and raise objection to the slaughter of cows.[21] Ratan Chand, the Diwan of 'Abdullah Khān and his agents abused the authority usurped by the Sayyid Brothers.

Muhammad Shāh was "a lover of pleasure and indolence, negligent of political duties, and addicted to loose habits, but of a somewhat generous disposition. He was entirely careless regarding his subjects.....In a short time, many of the officers of the kingdom put out their feet from the path of obedience to the sovereign, and many of the infidels, rebels, tyrants and enemies stretched out the hands of rapacity and extortion upon the weaker tributaries and the poor subjects."[22]

Nizam-ul-Mulk Āsaf Jāh was the only noble who was loyal to the throne and possessed the courage and ability to arrest the decay of the Mughals but he could do little because of the

jealousy of the Iranian faction, particularly the Sayyid Brothers. Despaired of rendering any useful service to the throne he went away to Deccan, leaving the emperor at the mercy of intriguers.

Muhammad Shāh neglected public business, passing his time entirely in pursuit of pleasure. Historians depict him as a lover of pleasure and indolence, negligent of political duties and entirely careless to the welfare of his subjects.[23]

The ascendancy of Sayyid Brothers was ultimately brought to an end. Husain 'Ali was killed and Hasan 'Ali ('Abdullah Khān) was made prisoner after being defeated near Agra. In 1772 he was poisoned. But the fate of Mughal empire remained unchanged as the Emperor failed to see the dangers facing him.

Vidya Dhar Mahajan writes: "It might have been expected that the disposal of the Sayyid Brothers would have strengthened the hands of Muhammad Shāh. Unfortunately that was not so. Young and handsome, and fond of all kinds of pleasures, he addicted himself to an inactive life which entirely enervated the energy of the Empire Muhammad Shāh's reign was long and there was some redeeming trait in his character. Unluckily, he did not take interest in the affairs of the state and consequences were most fatal. Province after province became independent."[24]

According to Wolseley Haig: "Muhammad Shāh demands our pity if he may not command our respect. Placed in a position which called for a genius he was a very ordinary person. Historians blame him for his devotion to pleasure rather than business, but the tragedy of his situation was that the most absolute devotion to business, by a man of his moral calibre would in no way have altered the course of events. A mere sickly puppet like Rafi-ud-Darajāt or Rafi-ud-Daula was perhaps hardly conscious of humiliation, but Muhammad Shāh appears to have realised both the hopelessness of the situation and his own powerlessness to amend it."[25]

To be brief, the empire carved out by the courage and valour of Babur and maintained by his worthy descendants, of whom the last was Aurangzib, quickly reached the doom prede-

termined for an autocracy falling in hands of incompetent and indolent rulers.

In 1151/1739 Nādir Shāh captured Lahore. From Lahore he sent to Muhammad Shāh a courteous letter reminding him that they were both of Turkish blood and warning him against his evil counsellors. Nādir's warning was received at first with ridicule, but his march towards Delhi gave way to panic which increased with every stage of the invader's advance. It is perhaps not necessary to narrate here the sack of Delhi by Nādir Shāh's army. It will suffice to say that by the time Nādir Shāh issued orders that the slaying and plundering should stop "a great part of the city was in ruins and the stench of the dead was soon intolerable. The corpses were piled in stacks and burnt, whether Hindus or Muslims, with the timber of the ruined houses."[26] Shāh Waliullah was 37 years of age at that time.

About the political situation at the court in Delhi after Nādir Shāh's departure, Dr. Satish Chandra writes: "The parties at the Mughal Court were also affected by Nādir Shāh's invasion. Among the old leaders, Sa'ādat Khān and Khān-i-Daurān died, while Nizām-ul-Mulk and Qamar-ud-din Khān forfeited the confidence of the Emperor for their sorry part in the battle of Karnal. Nizām-ul-Mulk decided once again to leave the Mughal Court to its devices and sought an agreement with the Marathas for maintaining his position in Deccan. Safdar Jang, Amir Khān, and a number of other nobles gradually rose in the Emperor's favour. The decline in the imperial prestige led to a resumption of the old struggle for *Wizarat*, with the important difference that the issue was now no longer one of revivifying the empire by internal reforms and new policies, but of preventing the Emperor from falling under the domination of either one or another of the 'powers' contending the mastery in North India."[27] The result was that three important provinces, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa fell apart from the empire under 'Ali Wardi Khān.

Muhammad Shāh fell sick of dropsy and grew rapidly worse. He died on 26th Rabi-ul-Thani, 1161/29th April, 1748 after holding the helm for 30 years and leaving the Mughal

empire at the verge of disintegration.

Shāh 'Ālam II (1173-1221/1759-1806)

Muhammād Shāh was succeeded by Ahmad Shāh (1748-54) and then by 'Ālamgir II (1754-59). Muhammad Shāh's reign had seen rapid deterioration of administration and laxity of morals among the nobles resulting in dissolution of the bonds of discipline throughout the empire, and by the time Shāh Alām II ascended the throne in 1173/1759, the Mughal rule was passing through the throes of death. Throughout his long reign, Shāh 'Alam remained a puppet in the hands of the ministers and the Marathas. After his defeat in the battle of Buxer in 1764, he gave the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the English East India Company and the latter promised to pay him an annual tribute of Rs. 26 lakhs. He also paid the price of leaning on Marathas by ceding the districts of Allahabad and Kara to them.

Even before Shāh 'Ālam assumed the role of emperor, the whole of northern India was practically at the mercy of Marathas, Jats and Sikhs. Reviewing the administrative policy of Marathas Rowlinson says: "The chief objection to be urged against the Maratha system of government is that outside their own territory, it was almost purely predatory. The Maratha was never a colonist. While away on his expeditions, his thoughts were always with his little holding in the Deccan hills, and he seldom intermarried with the people of the country. Other Hindu states took pride in improving the condition of the territory they conquered. They constructed temples, wells, canals, roads and other public works. The Marathas did nothing of this kind. Their *mulkdari* raids, by destroying the industries and wealth of the countries overrun, merely killed the goose which laid the golden eggs."[28] Jats and Sikh were no better than Marathas whose merciless plundering of the conquered territories defeated their own ends. It was then that Ahmad Shāh Abdāli crushed the power of Marathas in the battle of Panipat on January 14, 1761, thereby providing a respite to the country. Ahmad Shāh Abdāli sent for Shāh 'Ālam, deputed an emissary to invite him to

Delhi and got a letter sent to him by his mother Zeenat Mahal. Had Shāh 'Ālam been ambitious and possessed the ability to take advantage of the discomfiture of Marathas, he could have given a new lease of life to the Mughal empire after the battle of Panipat. But he possessed neither the courage nor the grit that makes man struggle with destiny. He returned to Delhi from Allahabad, but in 1772, after ten years, when the opportunity of restoring the power and authority of the Mughals had vanished. He became a puppet in the hands of intriguing nobles while Rohilas and Sikhs were dealing death blows to the empire which existed in name only. At least, Ghulām Qādir Rohila, grandson of Najib-ud-Daula, succeeded in capturing Delhi. He plundered the city, got the Mughal princes caned and brutally blinded the Emperor in 1788. Never before the Mughals had undergone such humiliation.

In 1789, Scindia paid back Ghulām Qādir Rohila in his own coin by putting him to sword and restoring the throne to Shāh 'Ālam. Scindia also fixed an annual pension of Rupees one lakh for Shāh 'Ālam who died in 1806 after occupying the throne for 47 years, out of which he ruled as a blind man for 18 years.

Intellectual and Religious Conditions

In the days of later Mughals which was marked by political uncertainty when predatory forces had plunged the whole country in lawlessness and disorder and the nobility had reached the depth of degradation there was marvellous upsurge of intellectual, educational and spiritual activity. We find in these days several masterminds who do not appear to belong to an era of decadence. These scholars have left several exquisite pieces of literary value with deep intellectual content although some of them were invalid or suffering from prolonged illness or plunged in grief for one reason or the other. Psychologists have explained such manifestations as the upsurge of suppressed ambitions and determination to overcome all odds which makes one accomplish such feats as are not possible in normal conditions. However, the religious and spiritual upsurge in that corrupt and shabby

condition of Indian society is yet another evidence of the latent power of Islam to fight in most adverse circumstances and to work miracles when the situation appears to be hopeless

We find depth of knowledge, brilliance of intellect, penmanship and pedagogic acumen in the writings of Maulana Ahmad b Abu Saeed alias Mulla Jeevan of Amethi (1047-1130/1638-1718), the author of *Nur-al-Anwar* and *Al-Tafsirat al-Ahmadiya*. Mulla Hamdullah of Sandila (d. 1160/1747) who wrote *Sharah-al-S llam* or *Bihamd-il-lah* Maulana Muhammad Hasan alias Mulla Hasan (d. 1199/1785) of Firangi Mahal, Maulana Rustam 'Ali of Kannauj (d. 1178/1763), Shaikh Sifatullah of Khairābād (d. 1157/1747), Shaikh 'Ali Asgar of Kannauj (d 1140/1727), Maulana Gulām 'Ali Āzād of Bilgram (d 1200/1786), Maulana Ghulām 'Ali Naqshband of Lucknow. (d. 1126/1714), Qazi Muhibullah of Bihar (d. 1119/1707) author of *Sallam-l-Uloom* and *Musallam-al-Thubūt*.[39] Qazi Mubarak of Gopā Mau (d. 1162/1749) author of *Sharh-Sallam* also known as *Qazi*, Maulana Muhammad Ali of Thana Bhawan, author of *Kashshāf Istalahat-al-Fanūn* (a unique work of its kind) and, lastly, Mulla Nizām-ud-din of Lucknow (d. 1161/1748) who compiled the syllabus which was readily adopted by all educational institutions in India and Central Asia. These are some of the writers and teachers whose creations dominated the educational system for a hundred years or so.[30]

In the field of mysticism we find Mirza Mazhar Jān-i-Jānan (1111-1195/1699-1781), an eminent Shaikh of the Naqshbandiyah-Mujadidyah order, about whom Shāh Waliullah says "Men of his stature are never numerous, but it is strange that he happened to be present during the times of anarchy and degeneration."[31] There were several other honoured men of God belonging to other mystical orders. Syed 'Abdur Razzāq of Bānsā (d. 1136/-1724) who happened to be the spiritual guide of Mulla Nizām-ud-din of *Dars-i-Nizami* fame, represented the Qādiryah order while Shāh Kalīm Ullah Jahānābadi (d. 1140/1728) and Shāh Fakhr-uz-Zamān of Delhi (d. 1199/1785) were distinguished mentors of Chishtiyah-Nizāmiyah order. Other elevated souls of the time

were: Shaikh Shāh Muhammad Ghaus Qādri of Lahore (d. 1154/1741) of the Qadiryah order; Shaikh Muhammad 'Ābid of Sunnām (d 1160/1747), Khwaja Muhammad Nāsir 'Andalīb[32] (d. 1172/1758), Shāh Munib Ullah of Bālāpur and Shāh Nur-Muhammad of Budaun (d. 1135/1723), all belonging to the Naqshbandiyah order. Thus we find distinguished mystics of Qādiryah, Chishtiyah and Naqshbandiyah orders providing moral and spiritual guidance to the people during these days. The extraordinary convergence of such a large number of men perfect in spirit has been mentioned by Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz in one of his letters in which he says:

> "During the reign of Muhammad Shāh twenty-two Shaikhs of different mystical orders happened to be present in Delhi—it is something which rarely comes about.[33]"

Social and Moral Decadence

The Muslim society, particularly its nobility, had however reached the depth of moral degeneration owing to profusion of wealth and luxury and the baneful influence exerted by the Iranian culture. The nobility had in fact been rendered totally incapable of performing the role usually played by the class in times of revolution and crisis. Their utter failure on the political and administrative fronts had actually helped to bring up men from the ranks who enabled the Mughal empire to linger on so long instead of collapsing suddenly. Enumerating the causes of the downfall of Mughal empire, Vidyadhar Mahājan writes in the *Muslim Rule in India* about the Mughal nobles of the later period.

> "Too much of wealth, luxury and leisure softened their character. Their harems became full. They got wine in plenty. They went in palanquins to the battlefield. Such nobles were not fit to fight against the Marathas, the Rajputs and the Sikhs. The Mughal nobility degenrated at a very rapid pace. According to J. N. Sarkar, no Mughal noble family retained its importance for more than one or two generations."[34]

Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz has given some examples of the luxurious living of Mughal nobles. He writes in one of his letters :

> "The women in the house of Nawab Qamar-uddin Khān used to conclude their bath with a dip in rose-water. The expenditure on *pan* leaves and flowers purchased for the women folk of another noble amounted to Rupees three hundred."[35]

Another historian Ghulām 'Ali Āzad, author of *Ma'āthir-al-Kirām*, says :

> "It was commonly known and stated by the people in Aurangābād that quite a large number of persons never cooked food in their own houses during the time of Amir-ul-Umra (Husain 'Ali Khān). The cooks of the Amīr-ul-Umra used to sell their share of victuals with the result that highly rich pilau could be purchased for a few paisas."[36]

Unsound Creeds and Practices

Unorthodox creeds and polytheistic practices disregarding the divine command to make religion exclusive for God had been taken over by the Muslims from the polytheists and Shi'ites, which were, to say the least, more dangerous for the Muslim society than their social and moral degeneration. These customs and usages were undermining the strength of the Muslims and making them ineligible for divine succour. A number of these practices were blatantly irreligious or polytheistic in character and quite unpardonable. Divine honours were paid to the graves of the saints, prostration was common before the so-called spiritual guides, shrines were venerated and bedecked with costly bed-sheets and flowers, oblations were offered for one's ancestors, fairs were held in grave-yards and musical concerts were held to honour the departed saints taken as guardian spirits in every part of the country. Exotic beliefs and customs such as celebration of festivals with processions, sacrifices to propitiate the demon spirits like Shaikh Saddo, participation in devotions to different gods and goddesses and keeping fasts in the name of saints

for invoking their aid in times of need smacked disbelief in the absolute overlordship of God, while names like 'Ali Bakhsh, Husain Bakhsh, Pīr Bakhsh or Sālār Baksh were indicative of the popular superstition that godly souls enjoyed powers to bestow favours on behalf of God.

The doctrine of *tauhid*, Oneness of God, had come to acquire a peculiar, restricted connotation: that God was undoubtedly the Creator and Lord of Universe but He had delegated His authority to the saints and godly souls who distributed favours on His behalf or acted as intercessors between God and man. *Shirk* or ascribing partners to God had been restricted to association of anything with God as the Creator and Lord of the universe, or prostration before any created being with the intention of worshipping it.

In short, Muslim India was not only passing through a social and political degeneration, it was also exposed to an acute moral and spiritual corruption which perhaps marked the debasement of the Muslim society to its lowest level. Syed Sulaimān Nadwi has vividly depicted the hopless situation then confronting the Indian Muslim society in one of his articles in this manner:

> "The Mughal Empire was about to collapse. Exotic beliefs and practice and innovations in matters of religion were common among the Muslims; impious shaikh and faqirs had turned the shrines of the saints into purple seats for beguiling the over-credulous masses; the teachers and the taught were busy in debating the moot points of logic and philosophy; legal niceties dominated the thought of every jurisconsult; search into principles of jurisprudence for an analogical deducation not attempted by the doctors of old was an unpardonable sin; and even those who were deemed to be learned, let alone the commoners, had hardly an inkling of the underlying wisdom of Quranic injunctions or the commandments of the *ahādith* and *fiqh*."[37]

Notes and References :

1. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, Delhi 1971, p. 316.
2. *Cambridge History of the World*, Delhi, 1970, p. 175.
3. For details see *Ma'āthir 'Ālamgīri*, (Calcutta 1871) by Muhammad Sāqi Musta'id Khān; *Dr. Barnier's Travel of India.*
4. See *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, Vol. III, pp. 281-91.
5. For an estimate of Aurangzib's character see Stanly Lane-Pool's *Aurangzib*, Zahir-ud-din Farūqi's *Aurangzib and His Age*, Jadunath Sirkar's *History of Aurangzib* and Shibli Nomāni's articles on Aurangzib.
6. The compilation is known in these countries as *Al-Fatāwā-i-Hindiyan.*
7. Stanley Lane-Poole, *Aurangzib*, Bombay, 1964, p. 79.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.
9. *Ibid., op. cit.*, p. 84.
10. Mu'iz-ud-din Jahāndār Shāh (1712-13).
11. Raf'i-ud-Darajāt (from 28th February to 4th June 1719).
12. Raf'i-ud-Daulā (He was a puppet in the hands of the Sayyid Brothers).
13. Muhi-us-Sunnah (November 1759).
14. *Siyarul Mutākhirīn*, Vol. II, p. 381; Cambridge History of India, *op. cit.*, Vol., IV, p. 324.
15. Dr. Satish Chandra, *Party and Politics at the Mughal Court*, 1077-40, Aligarh, 1959, p. 60.
16. *Cambridge History of India, op. cit.*, Vol., IV, p. 324.
17. V. D. Mahajan, *Muslim Rule in India*, Delhi, 1970, Pt. II, p. 321.
18. S. Ghulam Husain Tabatabai, *Siyar-ul-Mutākhirīn* (Calcutta 1902) pp. 381-82; Zaka Ullah, *Tārikh Hindusten*, Vol. IX, p. 33.
19. *Cambridge History of India, op. cit.* p. 332.
20. *Muslim Rule in India, op. cit.*, Part II, p. 328.
21. Zakā-ullah, *Tārikh Hindustān*, Vol. IX, p. 166.
22. Rustam 'Ali *Tarikh Hind*, cited in *Muslim Rule in India, op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 328.
23. *Muslim Rule in India, op. cit.*, Pt. II, p. 328.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 328.

25. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, pp. 373-74.
26. *Ibid.* p. 362
27. *Party and Politics at the Mughal Court*, *op. cit.*, pp. 254-55.
28. *The Cambridge History of India*, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 414-15.
29. Both these works were studied and their commentaries written in India and Egypt during the subsequent one hundered years.
30. Hakim S. 'Abdul Hai, *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. VI.
31. *Kalamāt-i-Tayyabāt*, p. 65.
32. Father of famous Urdu poet, Khwaja Mir Dard.
33. *Malfuzat-i-'Azīzi*, p. 108.
34. *Muslim Rule in India*, *op. cit.*, Pt. II, p. 343.
35. *Malfuzāt-i-'Azīzi*,
36. *Ma'āthir-al-Kirām* Vol. I, p. 170.
37. *Maqalāt-i-Sulaimāni* p. 44.

III

Ancestors of Shah Waliullah

Forefathers of the Shāh

Little details are available about the earliest forbears of Shāh Waliullah except that Shaikh Shams-ud-din Mufti had taken up residence in Rohtak. This was the time when biographical accounts were seldom written. We find, during the period, mostly the reminiscences and table-talks of the spiritual guides amongst which the *Siyar al-Aulia* of Khwāja Mīr Khurd about the eminent sufi Shaikh Khwāja Nizām-ud-dīn Aulia is the most celebrated. Two other works written during the time, which achieved considerable fame, were *Gulzār-i-Abrār* by Shāh Muhammad b. Hasan Ghausi of Mandwa and *Akhbār-al-Akhyār* by Shaikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddith of Delhi. The former dealt with the saints and scholars of Mandwa and Malwa. These works normally described the lives and achievements of eminent personalities living in the metropolitan cities, the capitals of the central or regional kingdoms and hardly mentioned anything about others unless anyone was the founder of any mystical order. Shāh Waliullah's forefathers lived in Rohtak, a back country town from the time of Shaikh Shams-ud-din Mufti to his grand father Shaikh Wajīh-ud-din, with the result that they hardly attracted the attention of any writer.

This chapter would have remained blank presenting an insurmountable difficulty for his biographers if Shāh Waliullah

had himself not written a small pamphlet about his ancestors, under the name of *Imdād fi Ma'āthar al-Ajdād*[1] It contains a sketchy reference to his forefathers with a bit detailed description of Shaikh Wajīh-ud-din. Hāfiz Muhammad Rahīm Bakhsh has expanded these details with the help of other contemporary historical and biographical writings to cover 113 pages of *Hayāt-i-Wali*, but as he has omitted the sources used by him, we have to rely only on *Ma'āthar al-Ajdād* in our account.

Genealogical Table

Shāh Waliullah, a direct descendant of Caliph Umar, has given his genealogical table tracing his ancestory back to the second Caliph. The first among his ancestors to take up residence at Rohtak was Shams-ud-din Mufti. This is confirmed by the genealogical table maintained by the descendants of Salār Hosām-ud-din, a brother of Shams-ud-din Mufti. The table as given by Shāh Waliullah is as under:

Shāh Waliullah b. As-Shaikh 'Abdur Rahīm b. As-Shahīd Wajīh-ud-din b. Mo'azzam b. Mansūr b. Ahmad b. Mahmūd b. Qawām-ud-din alias Qāzi Qāzan b. Qāzi Qāsim b. Qāzi Kabīr alias Qāzi Budh b. 'Abdul Malik b. Qutb-ud-din b. Kamāl-ud-din b. Shams-ud-din Mufti b. Sher Malik b. Muhammad 'Atā Malik b. Abdul Fath Malik b. 'Umar Hākim Malik b. 'Adil Malik b. Farūq b. Jirjīs b. Ahmad b. Muhammad Shahryār b. 'Uthmān b. Māhān b. Humāyūn b. Quraysh b. Sulaimān b. 'Affān b. 'Abdullah b. Muhammad b. 'Abdullah b. 'Umar b. Al-Khattāb.

The table includes several names with the appellation Malik. Shāh Waliullah has stated that it was a honorific title suffixed with the proper names like Khān during his own time.

Migration to India

As Shāh Waliullah has stated Shaikh Shams-ud-din Mufti was first among his ancestors who migrated to India and took up residence at Rohtak. It appears from the intervening links between Shāh Waliullah and Shaikh Shams-ud-din Mufti that the latter must have emigrated to India by the end of the seventh

century or in the initial decades of the eighth century of Islamic era. This was the time when the Mongols had laid waste a greater part of the eastern part of the Islamic world and sacked and plundered great many cities of Iran and Turkistan. *Tārikh Fīroz Shāhi* and other contemporary writings show that there had been a huge influx of educated and cultured families of these areas into India then ruled by the Turks. These Indian rulers of Turkish descent welcomed the emigrants, successfully repulsed the onslaught of Mongols and patronised the centres of arts and learning and spiritual guidance which had come into existence with the influx of refugees from Central Asia.[2] Their enlightened policy in this regard had helped in efflorescence of culture, arts and education as well as spiritual guidance of the masses throughout the Sultanate.

In Rohtak

It seems that Rohtak was then a flourishing urban centre on way to Delhi from the west and served as the first destination of in-coming emigrants. Shāh Waliullah says that the city had a dominant Islamic setting owning to the influence of Qurayshite families which had taken up residence there. Shaikh Shams-uddin also contributed to Islamisation of the city; for, as Shāh Waliullah relates, several miraculous deeds are attributed to him. There is nothing to cast any doubt about these descriptions since Shams-ud-din Qāzi was a man perfect in spirit and pure of heart. Normally, the state entrusted the charge of the city and the offices of Qāzi and Muhtasib to the most learned person in any city in those days, although he was not formally known by his official designation.

From Shams-ud-din Mufti to Shaikh Wajīh-ud-din

Kamāl-ud-din Mufti, the eldest son of Shaikh Shams-ud-din Mufti discharged the official duties entrusted to his father which later on fell to the charge of his son and grandson, Qutb-ud-din and 'Abdul Malik. Qāzi Budh, son of 'Abdul Malik, was formally appointed Qāzi of city, as the post had been created by

that time. Qāzi Budh had two sons; one by a wife from a Siddiqi family of Rohtak and the other by another one from a Saiyid family of Sonipat. The latter, Shaikh Mahmūd, who resigned from the office of Qāzi to take up another appointment under the Sultanate, had a son named Shaikh Ahmad. While still a lad, Shaikh Ahmad migrated to Sonipat where he took up residence with Shaikh 'Abdul Ghani b. Shaikh 'Abdul Hakīm who later on married his daughter to Shaikh Ahmad. Subsequently he came back to Rohtak again and got a house built for him outside the fort of Rohtak. His son Shaikh Mansūr is reported to be a man of parts possessing courage and administrative capacity. The first wife of Shaikh Mansūr was the daughter of Shaikh 'Abdullah b. Shaikh 'Abdul Ghani who bore him a son named Shaikh Mu'azzam. He was also known for his gallantry of which several feats are reported. Once Shaikh Mansūr had to fight a battle with a Raja. Shaikh Mu'azzam, as related by Shāh Waliullah on the authority of his father Shaikh 'Abdur Rahīm, was given the charge of the right flank of the army although he was then only twelve years of age. A hot battle ensued and large number of troops were killed on both sides. As the battle was raging in full fury Shaikh Mu'azzam received the news that his father had been killed which meant the defeat of his side. Thereupon Shaikh Mu'azzam pounced upon the enemy with dauntless courage, killed whoever came up against him and made straight for the Raja. An experienced and brave commander of the Raja tried to check his advance but he was dealt a deathblow. The enemy troops immediately hemmed around Shaikh Mu'azzam who had to get down from his horse. The Raja, however, forbade his troops to make a set at Shaikh Mu'azzam saying that he was surprised at the valour of that lad. The Raja kissed the hands of Shaikh Mu'azzam and asked for the reason of his desperate action. On being told by Shaikh Mu'azzam that he had vowed to fight until death since his father had been killed, the Raja assured him that his father was alive and sent word to Shaikh Mansūr that he was prepared to make peace for the sake of that young man.

Shāh Waliullah also relates from his father that once a band of thirty bandits decamped with the beasts of village Shikohpūr held in fief by Shaikh Mu azzam. The news was conveyed to him when he had sat down to take his meals. After taking the food, he took only one guide with him, forbidding others to accompany him, and pursued the robbers on his horse. When the fleeing looters came into his sight, he challenged them to face him. He shot volleys of bowshot at them with such a lightning speed that they surrendered to him by throwing away their arms and called the heaven to witness that they would never attempt again at cattle lifting from that village.

Married to the daughter of Saiyid Nūr-ul-Jabbār of Sonipat, Shaikh Mu'azzam had three sons: Shaikh Jamāl, Shaikh Fīroz and Shaikh Wajīh-ud-din. The last mentioned was the grandfather of Shāh Waliullah.

Shaikh Wajīh-ud-din Shahīd

Shāh Waliullah has given a bit detailed account of his grandfather Shaikh Wajīh-ud-din. He says that Shaikh Wajīh-ud-din was a man of courage as well as known for his piety. He used always to recite two parts of the holy Qurān every day and never missed the same whether he was in his house or out on excursion. In old age, when his eye-sight had become weak, he used always to keep a copy of the Qurān written in bold letters. When riding a horse, he never allowed it to enter a cultivated field even if others had trampled the cultivation. He always took a circuitous route on such occasions. During military operations when his comrades forcibly took hold of the farmers' live-stock in times of scarcity, he preferred to go hungry than to follow their practice. Shāh Waliullah's father relates that Shaikh Wajih-ud-din was always courteous and kind to his servants and poor vendors who approached him with their wares. In one of his travels he felt the urge to betake the path of spirit; searched for a pure-hearted soul, took oath of fealty to him and applied himself to mystical exercises assiduously.

Shah Waliullah relates that his father very often spoke of the

intrepidity of Shaikh Wajīh-ud-din. He has also mentioned several instances of his bravery when he had alone faced several persons in the combats. Shaikh Wajīh-ud-din had accompanied the royal army in its campaigns of Malwa and saved, on occasions, his comrades or officers who had been hemmed in by the enemy troops. Once he defeated three militant combatants singlehandedly. He is reported to be an adept in martial arts.[3]

During the war of succession following Shāh Jahān's illness, Shaikh Wajīh-ud-din was with Aurangzib. When Shāh Shuj'a raised the standard of revolt in Bengal, his cool courage and brave charge on the enemy ranks in an hour of crises swept away the enemy.[4] His valour was appreciated by Aurangzib who desired to promote him to a higher rank, but Shaikh Wajīh-ud-din declined to accept any reward. On several occasions he came to the rescue of his friends, exposing himself to danger, with exemplary courage and determination.[5] Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm is reported to have narrated several incidents of his father's intrepidity as well as assistance rendered to the poor and needy.

Shaikh Wajīh-ud-din took the daughter of Shaikh Raf'ī-ud-din Muhammad b. Qutb-ul-'Ālam as his wife. Shaikh Qutb-ul-'Ālam was the son of a noted mystic Shaikh 'Abdul 'Azīz Shakarbār.[6] The three sons of Shaikh Wajīh-ud-din were Shaikh 'Abdur Razā Muhammad, Shaikh 'Abdur Rahīm and Shaikh 'Abdul Hakīm.

Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm says that once his father remained so long in the state of prostration during the *tahajjud* (mid-night) prayer, that he feared whether his father had passed away. On being asked the reason for it, Shaikh Wajīh-ud-din explained that he was in a state of transport during which he had come to know the merits of martyrdom. He also said that he had beseeched God for being granted an opportunity to lay down his life in His way and ultimately an indication was given that he would achieve his heart's desire in Deccan. Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm further relates that although his father had, by that time, given up active service and was almost averse to joining a military

expedition any more, he purchased a horse, made preparations for the journey and set out for Deccan. He thought that he would achieve his goal at Sewārā, an independent kingdom beyond the limits of Mughal empire, whose ruler had once brutally treated a Qāzi. When he reached Burhānpūr, he had the premonition that he had gone ahead of the place of martyrdom indicated to him, so he retraced his steps. On the way back he took the company of certain merchants for they appeared to be religious-minded. He had thoughts about returning to his home after reaching Handia town where the party came across an old and frightened wayfarer who told them that he wanted to go to Delhi. Shaikh Wajīh-ud-din asked him to take his company and also offered to meet his expenses. The man turned out to be a spy of the marauders as he broke the news of the stay of merchants to his colleagues. A band of looters raided the *sirā'i* where Shaikh Wajīh-ud-din was busy reciting the Qur'ān. A few of the robbers asked Shaikh Wajīh-ud-din who he was and then told him that they had nothing to do with him but they would not spare the merchants. Shaikh Wajīh-ud-din, however, offered resistance to the robbers and got twenty-two wounds in the combat with them. He died fighting and reciting *takbīr*. Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm also says that he had a divination of the event but was forbidden to bring back the dead body of his father.

Shaikh Muhammad of Phulat

Shaikh Muhammad[7] of Phulat was the maternal grandfather of Shāh Waliullah. His forefathers were first settled in Siddhaur[8] but had taken up residence at Phulat during the reign of Sultan Sikandar Lodi. Son of Shaikh Muhammad 'Aqīl, Shaikh Muhammad showed the signs of brilliance from his childhood. Shaikh Jalāl, a spiritual successor of Saiyid Ādam Binnauri had predicted, just after he was born, that he was to become an elevated soul. He was initially educated by Shaikh 'Abdul Razā Muhammad, an uncle of Shāh Waliullah, and then completed his education under Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm. He returned to Phulat

after completing his education and devoted himself to spiritual exercises. Shaikh Muhammad was witty, generous, self-denying and extremely pious. He exterted a morally salutary influence on whoever happened to meet him. Shāh Waliullah has narrated several incidents of Shaikh Muhammad's love and regard for his mentor Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm,[9] who had permitted Shaikh Muhammad to enlist disciples for spiritual training. Shaikh Muhammad's son Shaikh 'Ubaidullah, the maternal uncle of Shāh Waliullah, had given his daughter in marriage to the Shāh. Shaikh Muhammad 'Āshiq,[10] the son of Shaikh 'Ubaidullah, was a spiritual successor of Shāh Waliullah, who had also attained perfection of spirit[11]. Shaikh Muhammad died on the 8th Jamadi-ul-Akhir, 1125/21st June, 1713.[12]

Shaikh Abul Razā Muhammad

Shaikh Abul Razā, the eldest son of Shaikh Wajīh-ud-din and uncle of Shāh Waliullah, has been given a prominent place in the *Anfās-al-'Ārifīn* and described by the Shāh as the *Imām al-Tariqah wal-Haqiqah* (leader of the spiritual path and truth). He received conventional education under different teachers, but attained the higher degrees of absolute certainly through his own intuition. When still a youngman he joined the company of a grandee with the permission of his father, but suddenly broke that association to lead a life of self-contentment and absolute reliance on God in order to follow the holy Prophet's precepts. He was so zealous of acting on the Quranic dictum: *If you desire this world's life and adornment, come! I will content you and release you with a fair release,*[13] that he asked his wife either to lead a frugal life with him or go back to her father. She preferred to brave the difficulties with him like the wives of the holy Prophet, rather than to be separated from him. It is related that he had often to bear the pangs of hunger for several days consecutively. Having a special regard for 'Abdul Qādir Jīlani, he felt an intense attachment to Caliph 'Ali.[14] Aurangzib expressed the wish, on several occasions, to call upon Shaikh 'Abul Razā Muhammad, but he never agreed to meet the

Emperor. He was averse to nobility, but extremely courteous to the poor artisans and labourers, and accepted their gifts even if these were a few paisas.

Shāh Waliullah describes him as a colossus of knowledge, silver-tongued orator and holy-minded gnostic. He was tall, of fair complexion with delicate features and his beard was scanty. Soft-spoken, he used to deliever sermons after Friday prayers in which he normally narrated three *ahādīth*, rendered them into Persian or the local dialect and then briefly explained their significance. He used to teach one book on each of the disciplines of Islamics, but later on confined himself to lectures on *Baidāwi* and *Mishkāt* only. He was a firm believer in the doctrine of *Wahdat-ul-Wajūd* of which he is reported to have had personal experience. He was also an expert in explaining difficult points in the aphorisms of earlier mystics. Also, reported to be one of those whose prayers were readily answered, the Shāh has cited a number of instances illustrating his holiness[15] and the miracles worked by him. He was extremely careful in following the *sunnah* of the holy Prophet. Often he used to recite devotional verses of Hindi poets. He died sometimes when his age was between fifty and sixty years, on the 17th Muharram 1101/26th May, 1689 after he had performed the *'asr* prayers. The word *āftāb* (sun) gives the year of his death.

Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm

Shāh Waliullah has described the spiritual perfection and attainments of his father Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm in the *Buwāriq-al-Wilāyah*. commonly known as *Anfās-al- Ārifīn*.[16] There are few biographies of a talented father written by his worthy son: one such work was *Tabaqāt-al-Shāf'iyah al-Kubra* by Shaikh Taj-ud-din as-Subki giving the biographical accounts of his father Shaikh Taqi-ud-din as-Subki and another is *Hasaratul Ā'lam Biwāfati Marj'e-al-Ālam*, a biography of 'Abdul Hakīm by his son 'Abdul Hai of Firangi Mahal.

We have presented here only those events and attainments of Shāh Abdur Rahīm which throw light on his personality as well

as his gifts of intellectual religious and spiritual felicity, since these would have moulded the aptitude of Shāh Waliullah. We have omitted most of his spiritual experiences and events relating to miraculous performances, although germane to the time we are speaking of and even to the genius of Shāh Waliullah himself, for the simple reason that these would be difficult to be appreciated by the people now-a-days. It would suffice to mention here that his piety and godliness recalls to mind the saints of the time past, who had attained the inward and outward perfection illustrating the Divine bounty thus stated in the Qurān: *Each day His is an affair new*,[17] and *each do We supply, both these and those, from the bounty of thy Lord. And the bounty of thy Lord can never be walled up.*[18]

Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm's maternal grandfather, Shaikh Raf'ī-ud-din was a pious soul who had distributed his estates and effects among his heirs during his life-time. The mother of Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm was the youngest among the children of Shaikh Raf'i-ud-din who was then still unmarried. Instead of bequeathing any property to her Shaikh Raf'ī-ud-din gave her the aphorisms and ancestral tables of his spiritual guides. When it was pointed out to him that the girl required something by way of dowry rather than those writings, Shaikh Raf'ī-ud-din gave the reply: "I have inherited these from my ancestors. She will give birth to a son who would deserve this patrimony. As for her dowry, Allah will provide it, not I". Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm relates that his grandmother handed over those papers to him when he had become old enough to read them.[19]

The birth-date of Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm has not been mentioned anywhere. However, since he died in 1131/1719 at the age of seventy-seven years, he should have been born in the year 1054/1644.

As steated earlier, Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm had two more brothers Shaikh 'Abul Razā and Shaikh 'Abdul Hakīm.

"I used to sport a turban when I was still a teenager," says Shāh Abdur Rahīm, "and sit in a reverential position like the elders. I used to wash myself thoroughly in performing the

ablution, abiding by all the requirements of the *sunnah*. My uncle Shaikh 'Abdul Hai, who was a pious man used to watch me with satisfaction and remark that he was glad that the traditions of his family would be maintained by me. He used to say, "What does it matter if my maternal offsprings inherit this patrimony instead of the paternal ones?"[20]

Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm was religious-minded from his youthful days and indifferent to the affairs worldly. If one of his elders advised him to do anything that promised material well-being, he used to say in reply that he did not need it Khwaja Hāshim, a Shaikh of Naqshbandiyah order belonging to Bukhara who had taken up residence near his house, marked the inclination of Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm and advised him to scribe the Divine names several hundred times every day.[21] Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm, as he related later on, took the suggestion so seriously that once while he was making a copy of the commentary of Mulla 'Abdul Hakīm on the *Sharh 'Aqā'd*, he wrote down the names of God on several pages unintentionally.[22]

Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm called upon Shaikh 'Abdullah also known as Khwaja Khurd, the son of Khwaja Bāqi Billah in order to swear allegiance to him for spiritual guidance. Khwaja Khurd, however, advised him to seek out one of the spiritual successors of Saiyid Ādam Binnauri. Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm thereupon enquired if Hāfiz Saiyid 'Abdullah,[23] who lived near his house, would be suitable? Khwaja Khurd approved the suggestion and thus Shāh 'Abdur Rahim came to enlist himself as a disciple of Hāfiz Saiyid 'Abdullah. Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm says that he used to keep the company of both these godly persons although the Hāfiz used to pay more attention to his spiritual guidance. Once the Hāfiz told Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm, "When you were still a youngster playing with other children, I happened to see you. I felt attracted to you and prayed God to make you one of the elects through me. Thanks God that He has answered my prayer."[24]

Education

Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm studied *Sharh 'Aqāid Hāshiya-i-Khiyāli*

and other preliminary text-books under his elder brother Abul Raza Muhammad. He received instruction in the *Sharh-i-Ma wāqif* and other books of *usul* from Mirza Zāhid Harwi who paid special attention to coach him. Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm says that if he ever asked Mirza Zāhid not to continue the lesson as he had not made the required preparation, he would insist that the Shāh should go over a line or two in order to avoid missing the lesson that day. The Shāh also says that Khwaja Khurd satisfactorily explained to him some of the difficult passages of the *Hāshiya-i-Khiyāli* and taught him parts of certain other books so thoroughly that he was able to understand the rest of it by himself. Khwaja Khurd had not only received instruction from Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm's maternal grand-father Shaikh Raf'i-ud-din but had also been his disciple in the spiritual discipline, and hence he was very considerate and careful in teaching the Shāh.

After the death of Saiyid 'Abdullah the Shāh turned to Khalifa Shaikh 'Abul Qāsim[25] of Akbarābād, a man of marked spiritual insight belonging to the Abul 'Alāiya Ahrāriya order and then to 'Amir Nur-ul-'Alā. Khalifa Abul Qāsim even allowed Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm to impart spiritual guidance to others according to his school. The Khalifa used to treat Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm with a special regard since one of the Shāh's maternal forefathers, Shaikh 'Abdul 'Azīz Shakarbar, had been his spiritual guide.

Shāh Waliullah has described in the *Anfās-al-Ārifīn* the communions of his father along with a number of other men known for their spiritual insight.[26] It was an age of faith and spirituality when mystic disciplines flourished in every region of the Muslim world. Shāh Waliullah has accordingly narrated several events illustrating the intensity and range of the spiritual power commanded by his father[27] as well the miracles worked by him.[28] He has also given the aphorisms[29] of his father which reveal the depth of his knowledge, insight and divine afflatus.

Shāh Waliullah reports that his father normaly followed the Hanafite canon but in certain particular matters he used to act on his own understanding of the *Hadith* or in accordance

with the dictates of other juristic schools. Such exceptions included recitation of the *sūrah Fātiha* in congregational prayers and in funeral services.

The influence exerted by the companionship and spiritual guidance of Khwaja Khurd on Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm, while he was still a young man, as well the instruction received by him from Khwaja 'Abdul Qāsim Akbarabadi (whose spiritual link reached Khwaja 'Ubaid Ullah Ahrār through a chain other than that of Mujaddid Alf Thāni and Khwaja Bāqi Billāh and other precursors of that order) and Amīr Nūr-ul-'Alā b. Amīr 'Abul 'Alā Akbarābadi, had made him inclined to the doctrine of *Tauhīd Wajūdi* or the Unity of Being. Khwāja Bāqi Billāh had also been a follower of that doctrine for a long time and it is difficult to say whether he had repudiated it later on or not. Shaikh 'Abdul 'Azīz Shakarbār (d. 975/1567), one of his forefathers on the maternal side, had also been predisposed to the *Tauhīd-i-Wajūdi*. All these factors had led Shaikh 'Abdur Rahīm to be swayed by that doctrine and to show greater reverence to Shaikh Abkar and his teachings but he never deviated in the least from the way of *shariah*.[30]

Shah Waliullah says that his father used to mention Shaikh Muhi-ud-din Ibn 'Arabi respectfully and often remarked that he could deliver lectures to expound *Fasūs-al-Hikam* of the Shaikh Akbar and illustrate its contents with the help of Quranic verses and sayings of the holy Prophet in such a way that no doubt about their authenticity would be left in any mind. But, as he added, he desisted from it since he feared that most of the people would not be able to understand them and would be led astray to unorthodoxy and irreligiousness.

Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm was one of the scholars selected for the compilation of *Fatāwah 'Alamgīri*. This monumental code of Islamic law was compiled under the supervision of Shaikh Nizām-ud-din of Burhānpūr, under the orders of Aurangzib 'Ālamgīr, at a cost of rupees two lakhs.[31] Syed 'Abdul Hai has given the names of its compilers in the *Al-Thaqāfat al-Islāmiyah-fil-Hind*. There were twenty-one compilers, one of whom was

Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm [32]

Shāh Waliullah writes in the *Anfas-al-'Ārifin* that Aurangzib took keen interest in the preparation of the *Fatawah*. Mulla Nizām-ud-din used to read one page of it daily before the Emperor. One day he read the portion compiled by Mulla Hāmid wherein the issue being discussed had rather become complex owing to the contrasting rulings drawn from two juristic works. Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm had earlier seen this portion and finding it involved, had commented on the margin that "the scribe not being clear about it had made it more complicated, the correct view is that....."

While reading that portion before the Emperor, Mulla Nizām-ud-din recited the comment of Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm also. Since Aurangzib was always very attentive while listening to the book, he immediately asked, "What is this?" Mulla Nizām-ud-din excused himself by saying that he would further study it and let the Emperor know about it on the following day. Mulla Nizām-ud-din expressed his dissatisfaction to Mulla Hāmid saying that it was because of his undue self-confidence that he had to cut a sorry figure before the Emperor. Mulla Hāmid thereupon charged Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm for causing the ugly situation to arise, but the Shāh maintained his stand and explained the contradiction involved in the citations made by Mulla Hāmid. The matter ended there, but it gave rise to jealousy against the Shāh among his colleagues. Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm, therefore, resigned from the Board of Compilers.[33]

Character and Habits

Shāh Waliullah writes that Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm was polite in disposition and spotless in character. He was courageous, prudent and self-respecting. Vigilant of the world to come, he was also not heedless of the worldly affairs, but he always chose the path of moderation in every matter. In his litanies and prayers, he was neither excessive like the ascetics nor he turned away from any religious obligation like the indolents. He was never fastidious about his dress and wore whatever was available,

but he was always seen in neat and tidy raiment. He hardly ever went to the market for making purchases nor paid a visit to any grandee or noble. If, however, anyone of them came to see him, he received him courteously and showed him due deference. If such a visitor asked for advice, he offered him counsel in a seemly manner asking him to do the right and avoid the wrong. The Shāh rendered honour to the learned and avoided the company of igorants. He was also extremely careful to follow the practice of the holy Prophet in every matter. He never missed any congregational prayer unless it became impossible to do so, nor showed any inclination towards the things impermissible. He was not averse to engage himself in mundane chores, if a need arose. He led a simple life, neither gave himself airs like certain scholars, nor was heedless of etiquette as was usually the case with mystics and friars. He took a loan only when it was absolutely necessary for he disliked borrowing for maintaining a higher standard of living. He often forbade others to do so.

His practice was to recite *darūd* one thousand times, *nafi athbāt* (negation of existence) a thousand times and the Divine Names twelve thousand times every day. He had taken up delivering sermons based on the *Mishkāt*, *Tanbīh-al-Ghafilin* and *Ghaniyāt-al-Tālibin* after the death of his brother Shaikh 'Abul Razā. Towards the end of his life he had started writing a commentary of the Quranic verses but it had to be discontinued by the time he had completed the exegesis of the *Sūrat-al-Baqarah* and *Sūrat-ul-Imrān* owing to his declining health.

Religious Zeal

Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm had inherited his family traditions of courage and valour as well as the zeal for religion. His father had died fighting bravely while his forefathers had been valiant combatants. He did not have an occasion to show his valour in any battle yet several incidents have been related in the *Anfās-al-Ārifin* which go to show that he was bold and fearless, possessed the quality of fortitude and had an ardent passion for the religion. These were the qualities he had inherited from his

ancestors and which he passed on to his progeny.

Wives and Children

Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm was first married during the life time of his father. Only one son, Salāh-ud-din was born to his wife who died during his teens.[34] The first wife of Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm died in 1128 or 1129/1716-17 after the marriage of Shāh Waliullah.[35] The second wife of the Shāh was the daughter of Shaikh Muhammad of Phulat who gave birth to two sons, Shāh Waliullah and Shāh Ahlullah.

Death

In his seventy-seventh year the Shāh fasted during Ramadhan for the last time. In the succeeding month he fell ill and soon he was hanging between life and death. There was a temporary recovery from sickness, but he had a relapse in the beginning of Safar. A bit earlier than dawn one day he was found sinking again but he continued to enquire if it was time for the dawn prayer. On getting a reply in negative several times, he grew a bit angry and said: "Well, if it is not the time for your prayer. it has arrived for mine." He asked those attending him to help him face the *Qibla* and then he performed the prayers by making signs of genuflexion and prostration, although it was uncertain whether the time for *fajr* prayer had actually arrived or not. The prayer ended, he got himself busy in the litanies and died in that condition. This was the morning of Wednesday, the 12th of Safar, 1131/23rd December, 1718. Farrukh Siyar was then the ruling sovereign who was imprisoned by the Sayyid Brothers soon after the death of the Shāh. Farrukh Siyar was strangulated to death after 50 days' imprisonment during which he was subjected to inhuman brutality and the city seethed with disorder and discontentment. Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm was 77 years of age at the time of his death.[36]

Shāh Waliullah's estimate of Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm

Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm has left nothing in writing (save a

pamphlet) which may evince his intellectual attainment. All that we know about his talents has come to us through his worthy son Shāh Waliullah who has portrayed a lively profile of his father in the *Anfās-al-'Arifīn*. His description shows that Shāh Waliullah was impressed by the intellectual gifts, inward perfection of spirit, pure-heartedness and angelical qualities of his father to an extent more than a talented son usually is of his father. His graphic account of Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm convinces the reader that he was not merely confident but felt deeply impressed by his father's compass of mind and spiritual attainments. *Anfās-al-'Ārifīn* makes it abundantly clear that Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm's guidance and training of Shāh Waliullah had been chiefly responsible for the development of his intellectual faculties and the perfections, inward as well as outward, attained by him. It seems that Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm had succeeded in the transfusion of his inner virtues into his son.

Characteristics of Arab Immigrants

The brief description of Shāh Waliullah's family presented in these pages highlights three qualities which seem to be conspicuous in his forefathers.

The first of these was their attachment to Islam, its study and preaching, piety and inclination to serve as teachers and jurisconsults. There are always a few exceptions to this rule, but the academic traditions of a family always help in the grooming of scholarly persons. And if these traditions accompany an inclination to piety and health of soul, the grace of God can always be hoped to protect its members for serving the cause of religion. It has always happened with the pure-hearted souls as illustrated in the story of two orphan boys about whom the Qurān records: *And their father had been righteous*,[37] so thy Lord intended that the twain should attain their maturity and bring forth for themselves their treasure as a mercy from their Lord. Several families can be found in India whose continuous service in the propagation of religion and knowledge bears witness to this fact.

Another trait peculiar to the families tracing their descent

to the Arab stock is the painstaking care they have taken in preserving their genealogical tables—more meticulously than even the Arabs or their descendants in other Muslim countries—and their anxiety to maintain the purity of their blood which has sometimes resulted in limiting the nuptial ties to the closed circle of their own families. All this was partly due to exaggerated ideas relating to preservation of one's proud lineage and partly because of caste distinctions and social set up already prevalent in this country. Islam does not subscribe to these misplaced ideas of racial or caste distinctions but these came to be accepted by Muslims in the later period, particularly in the non-Arab countries. This, however, saved these families in maintaining their distinctive qualities and cultural identity for hundreds of years in the non-Arab or non-Muslim countries.

The third characteristic inherited by these families from the Quraysh was what is known as *farūsiyah* and *futawwah* in Arabic. These terms connote manly qualities of courage and valour as we have seen in the case of Shaikh Mu'azzam and Shaikh Wajīh-ud-din. This family trait was to manifest itself in a greater degree in Shāh Muhammad Ismāil, the grandson of Shāh Waliullah.

There are other reasons also, psychological and historical, for the preservation of these ancestral traits by their descendants. The people of Arab descent who migrated to India, from time to time, from Hijaz, Iraq, Iran or Turkistan, very often did so to save their religion, culture and honour endangered by the sweeping conquests of the Mongols. Their progeny could not forget, for several generations, why their forefathers had left their hearth and home. They tried to safeguard their proud patrimony and it was no wonder that God blessed them for the same reason. They could surely claim the Quranic description of "those who migrated and were driven forth from their houses and persecuted in My cause, and who fought and were slain."[38]

There were also families of Arab stock which had migrated to India for fighting in the way of God and spreading His message for which India of the sixth and seventh centuries of

Islamic era happened to be the most suitable region. This extensive land which is rather a sub-continent had been fully brought under the arms of Islam by that time. There were, however, numerous pockets ruled by Indian potentates who did not allow Islamic religious observances within their territories while others, subdued by the Sultans, raised the banner of revolt as soon as they got an opportunity to do so. It was not possible for the Sultans to maintain a large standing army for crushing such rebellions. Emigrants, courageous and ambitious, were always too willing to reconquer these territories for the central government for they deemed it their religious duty and also a means to obtain fiefs or appointment to the posts of governors and *qazis*. Indian history offers numerous examples of such Arab or Iranian immigrants who had succeeded in conquering such far off terrains which had eluded the victorious troops of the Sultanate.[39]

These incoming families were always conscious of the noble purpose for which their forefathers had migrated to India. The two goals they never lost sight of were spreading the message of Islam and maintaining their distinctive cultural and religious identity in an alien atmosphere. They knew that only by preserving the qualities of valour and courage they could live with self-respect and honour in a land known for assimilating all foreign influences. This awareness had helped them to preserve their identity for several generations to come.

These sentiments have been clearly expressed by Shāh Waliullah in one of his tracts written under the title of *Al-Maqālata-al-Wadhiyata fi-al-Nasīhata wal-Wasiyat* which is in the form of a will addressed primarily to his own family members but is really meant for all Indian Muslims.

He writes in it :

> "We should never forget that we are strangers here since our forefathers emigrated to India. Our lineage and language, both of which are of Arabia, are the things to be pround of. They bring us nearer to the leader of all human beings, the foremost among the messengers of God. the pride of all that this world contains.

> Muhammad, the Apostle of Allah, on whom be peace and blessings. This is the greatest blessing of God which demands that we should not allow ourselves, as far as it is within our means, to be alienated from the usages, customs and traditions of the Arabs among whom the holy Prophet was brought up. We should not adopt the habits and manners of the non-Arabs and non-Muslims."[40]

He also writes in the same treatise :

> "He is fortunate amongst us who has learnt something of the Arabic language, its grammar and syntax and studied the Qur'ān and *hadīth*. We should continue to pay visits to the sacred Mosques and create an inner attachment to them in our hearts for these constitute the key to the divine blessings ; the least estrangement from or aversion to these would cause us to be degraded and deprived of divine grace."[41]

Shāh Waliullah belonged not only to the Arab stock but was also a direct descendant of the second Caliph 'Umar whose progeny had in the past stepped forward for the defence of Islam on several occasions. They had fought the anti-Islamic forces and revived the true faith. Their family traditions were a source of pride to them as well as acted as an incentive to strive for preservation of Islamic beliefs and practices in their original form. It was an illustrious son of the same descent who had in the tenth century courageously fought Akbar's calamitous call of religious electicism, the *Dīn-i-Ilāhi*, which was really meant to replace Islam by a new religion. Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid Alf Thāni had deemed it a duty incumbent on him to fight that contamination of faith.[42] One of his letters written to Mulla Hasan of Kashmir expressed his disgust with the irreligious teachings and practices of certain mystics of his day. He had written :

> "This humble self cannot countenance such prattle which makes his Fārūqi blood boil in anger."[43]

On another occasion when he was told that the first four

caliphs were not being mentioned in the sermons being delivered before the Friday prayer in Samānā town, he wrote :

> "This distressing news, insufferable for me, has stirred the feelings of a Fārūqi that I am and has made me to scribe these lines."[41]

It is fairly certain that the bent of mind inherited by Shāh Waliullah from his forefathers must have urged him to devote himself to the task of Islamic revival which involved calling the people back to the original creed, rejection of innovations and polytheistic practices, teaching and preaching of the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* and refutation of unorthodox views held by the Shi'ites. Psychological and racial instincts running in the blood and the behavioral experience of good many families support this view which has been thus expressed in a *hadīth* : "People are deposits like the mines of silver and gold ; those among them who were better during the days of pagan past would be better in Islam provided they are able to comprehend it."[45]

Notes and References :—

1. It is a small pamphlet of 10 pages of average size and is included in a collection of his five articles. It was printed by Matb'a Ahmadi, Delhi. *Anfas-al-Ārifīn* comprises this article with seven more articles written by Shāh Waliullah.
2. For details see *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, Vol. II, pp. 147-48.
3. *Ma'āthar al-Ajdād*, pp. 6-7.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.
6. Shaikh 'Abdul 'Aziz 'Abbāsi (898-975/1493-1567) of Jaunpūr who later on took up residence at Delhi was a prominent Shaikh of the Chishtiyah order. He was the spiritual successor of Shaikh Qāzi Khān of Zafarābād and Shaikh Tāj Mahmūd of Jaunpur, both belonging to the Chishtiyah school. He was exceedingly courteous and humble and reposed confidence in the doctrine of *Wahdat-ul-Wajūd*. He used to write *zarra-i-nāchīz* (worthless speck) before his name in his letters, and strangely enough, the expression was computed to indicate the year of his death. He died reciting the Quranic

verse : 'Therefore glory be to Him in whose hand is the dominion over all things! Unto Him ye will be brought back' (36 : 82). Shāh Waliullah has written a small treatise entitled *Al-Nabadhatul Ibrizyata fil-Latifata-al-'Azizyata* about him. (*Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. IV).

7. Shāh Waliullah has written a pamphlet entitled *Al-'Atīyata al-Samadīyah fi-al-Anfās-al-Muhammadiyah* about him. The tract is included in Shāh Waliullah's *Majmu'a-al-Rasā'il*.

8. Now in district Barabanki.

9. *Al-'Atīyata al-Samadīyah, op. cit.* p. 20.

10. See *Nuzhatul-Khawatir*, Vol. VI, for biographical details of Shaikh Muhammad Āshiq.

11. *Al-'Atīyata al-Samadīyah, op. cit.*, pp. 22-25.

12. *Ibid*, p. 25.

13. Q. 33 : 28.

14. *Anfās-al-'Ārifīn*, pp. 86-88.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 89-94.

16. First published by Matb'a Ahmadi, Delhi and thereafter at Mujtabā'i Press, Delhi. The references are from the first edition.

17. Q. 55 : 29.

18. Q. 17 : 20.

19. *Anfās-al-'Ārifīn*, p. 4.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

21. Known as *Istaktāb*, it was a means to sink the remembrance of God in one's heart.

22. *Anfās-al-'Ārifīn*, p. 5.

23. See *Anfās-al-'Ārifīn*, pp. 6-15.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

25. Shaikh Abul Qāsim was a spiritual successor of Shaikh Muhammad Wali of Nārnaul. He also benefited from the guidance provided by Shaikh Abul 'Alā, the mentor of Shaikh Wali Muhammad. He was permitted to impart spiritual instruction by Shaikh Wali Muhammad. Shaikh Abul Qāsim died in 1089/1678. His mystical order known as Abul 'Alāiya Ahrariya, represented a fusion of Chishtiyah and Naqshbandiyah systems. Shaikh Muhammad Tirmidhi of Kalpi also subscribed to this order. (See *Nuzhatul Khawatir*, Vol. V, p. 22.

26. See *Anfas-al-'Ārifīn*, pp. 29-34.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 35-50.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 50-65.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 66-85.
30 This had led Shāh Waliullah to take an attitude showing compatability of the two doctrines of *Wahdat-ul-Wajūd* and *Wahdat-us-Shahūd*.
31. Which in term of modern prices would be more than rupees fifty lakhs.
32. Hakim Syed Abdul Hai al-Hasani, *Al-Thaqāfat al-Islamiyah fil Hind*, Demascus, p. 111.
33. *Anfās-al-'Ārifīn*, p. 24.
34. There are other reports to suggest that Shāh Waliullah's step-brother died after coming to age.
35. Shāh Waliullah writes in the *Al-Juz-al-Latīf* that he was fourteen years of age when his father got him married. He made haste and disagreed with those who wanted to defer the marriage for sometime. The Shāh also says that soon after his marriage, the family had to suffer several bereavements one of which was the death of his step-mother. His father had hinted that he wanted to avoid postponement of the marriage which would have become unavoidable due to these sad occurrences.
36. *Anfās-al-'Ārifīn* pp. 83-85.
37. Q. 18 : 82.
38. Q. 3 : 185.
39. To cite one example by way illustration, Syed Qutb-ud-din al-Madani (d. 677 A.H.), the proginator of Qutbi Hasani family of Oudh to which belonged Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, came to India in the seventh century by way of Ghazni with a retinue of his family members and others. From Delhi he moved on to the east and conquered Kannauj, Manikpur and Kara from the Rajas ruling over those territories and thus brought those territories under the then Sultanate. See *Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd—His Life and Mission*, pp. 21-22.
40. *Al-Maqalāt al-Wadhiyat-fi-al-Nasīhata wal-Wasīyata*, Delhi, 1267 A.H.
41. *Ibid.*
42. See *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, Lucknow, 1983, Vol. III.
43. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, *Maktūbāt Imām Rabbāni*, Lucknow, 1877, Vol. I, Letter No. 100.
44. *Ibid*, Vol. II, Part VI, Letter No. 15.
45. *Sahīh Muslim*.



IV

A Biographical Sketch

Shāh Waliullah[1] was born at dawn on Wednesday, the 4th of Shawwāl 1114/10th February, 1703 at Phulat (now in district Muzaffarnagar) in the house of his maternal grandfather. His year of birth can be computed from his chronogrammatic name 'Azīm-ud-din.[2] Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm was sixty years of age at the time of Shāh Waliullah's birth. It is related that Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm decided to contract the second marriage while his first wife, the mother of his eldest son Shaikh Salāh-ud-din was still alive on having the divination of a son from another wife. Shaikh Muhammad of Phulat on coming to know of the intention of Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm, offered the Shāh[3] to give his daughter in marriage which took place early in the year Shāh Waliullah was born.

The name of Shāh Waliullah's mother, given in the *Al-Qaul-al-Jali*, was Fakhr-un-Nisa, The author of this book Shaikh Muhammad who happened to be a nephew of Shāh's mother reports that she was well-versed in religious disciplines. He says: "His (Shāh Waliullah's) mother had received schooling in the Qur'ān and *hadith*, was adept in the spiritual path and a knower of truth. She was as qualified as her name indicated; a pride for the womenfolk."[4]

Shāh Waliullah relates that his father had been foretold of his birth in a dream by Khwājā Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyār Kākī

who also asked his father to give his name to the baby. However, Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm forgot about the instruction of the Khwājā and thus he was given the name of Waliullah. Later on when his father recalled it to his memory he was bynamed as Qutb-ud-din Ahmad.[5]

Shāh Waliullah was seven years of age when he first joined his parents in the midnight prayer and gave his hand into theirs, as predicted in the vision of his father before his birth.[6]

Education

Shāh Waliullah was admitted into the primary school (maktab) at the age of five years.[7] He was circumcised when he had attained the age of seven years, and also started offering prayers regularly. He committed the Qur'ān to his memory within a year and started schooling in Arabic and Persian.[8] After he had read the preliminary text-books; he studied the *kāfiyah*. At the age of ten he began the study of the *Sharh Jāmi*. Shāh Waliullah says that the study of these books had fitted him for going through other books by himself. The Shāh poured over a part of *Baidāwi* when he was fourteen and finished his schooling of the then prevalent curriculm at the age of fifteen years. His father invited a large number of guests to partake in a repast on that occasion.[9]

The Shāh then studied a major portion of the *Mishkāt* under his own father and was also taught parts of *Sahīh Bukhāri*, *Shamā'il Tirmidhi* Quranic commentaries of *Madārik* and *Baidwāi* by him.[10] He says that it was a grace of God that he attended the lectures delivered by his father on the exegesis of the Qur'an which helped him to understand the Qur'an in depth.[11]

The Syllabus followed by the Shāh

Shāh Waliullah has given in detail the syllabus undergone by him. *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) included *Sharh Waqāyah* and a part of *Hidāyah*, *Usūl-Fiqah* (juristic principles) had *Hosāmi* and the major portion of *Taudhīh-wa-Talwīh*, *Mantiq* (logic) comprised *Sharh Shamsiyah* and a part of *Sharh Matāl'e*, *Kalam*

(theological dialectics) included the whole of *Sharh-i-'Aqā'id* and certain parts of the *Hāshiyah-i-Khiyāli* and *Sharh-i-Mawāqif*. *Sulūk* (mysticism) had parts of *'Awārif-al-Ma'ārif* and *Rasā'il Naqshi-bandiyah*, and *Haqā'iq* (dogmatics) included *Sharh Rubā'iyāt-i-Jāmi* and *Lawāyih Muqaddimah Sharh-i-Lam'āt*. *Muqaddimah Naqād al-Nasūs*, *Khawās-i-Asmā'-wa-Ayāt* and *Al-Fawāyed al-Ma'ātah*.

The syllabus of *Tibb* (medicine) included *Mūjiz*, *Falsafah* (philosophy) had *Sharh Hidāyat-al-Hukamā* and few other treatises, *Ma'āni* (rhetoric) comprised a greater portion of *Mutawwal* and the part of *Mukhtasar al-Ma'āni* containing commentary of Mulla Zādā and certain books of Mathematics and numerology.

The syllabus undergone by Shāh Waliullah was to a large extent prepared by Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm. In the syllabus prevalent in India since the seventh century, certain additions relating to theological dialectics, rhetoric and logic had been made by the end of ninth century on the arrival of Shaikh 'Abdullah and Shaikh 'Azizullah from Multan to Delhi. Then in the tenth century, when Amīr Fathullah Shirāzi came to Delhi, certain writings of the Iranian scholars like Muhaqiq Dawwāni, Mīr Sadr-ud-din Shirāzi, Mīr Ghiyāth-ud-din Mansūr and Mirza Jān also found place in the curriculum. Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm adopted a selective approach in preparing the syllabus for his son, which showed his realism as well as confidence in the ability and intelligence of his son. He deleted several text-books which were merely repetitive as, for instance, he got him to study only *Kāfiyah*, and *Sharh Jāmi* for grammar and syntax in place of *Misbāh*. *Lubb-al-Albāb* (of Qazi Nasīr-ud-din Baidāwai) and *Irshād* (of Qazi Shihab-ud-din of Daulatabād). In the juristic principles he taught *Hosāmi* and certain parts of *Taudih-wa-Talmih* in place of the prevalent text-books that is, *Manār* and its commentary and *Usūl Bazdawi*. He also deleted *Kashshāf* in exegesis, *Mashāriq ul-Anwār* in *hadith* and *Muqamāt Harīri* in literature although the last mentioned book was considered an important part of the then curriculum and certain teachers even

insisted on memorisation of a part of the book. It is also possible that a few of the text-books deleted by Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm might have lost their importance in the pedagogic circles by the beginning of the twelfth century.

It is to be noted that in the twelfth century Mulla Nizām-ud-din of Firangi Mahal, Lucknow, had brought about significant changes in the curriculum of Arabic madrasas. Mulla Nizām-ud-din who died in 1161/1748 being a bit elder than Shāh Waliullah, made significant changes by including new text-books particularly for the study of grammar, etymology and syntax, logic and philosophy, mathematics, rhetoric and theological dialectics. A few additions and alterations came to be made later on by the disciples of Mulla Nizām-ud-din whose curriculum known as *Dars-i-Nizāmi* was voluntarily adopted by all the educational institutions. It is still prevalent in certain institutions following the old curriculum.[12]

The syllabus reported to have been gone through by Shāh Waliullah includes no text-book on Arabic literature although his Arabic works, especially the *Hvjjat Allāh al-Bāligha*, bear witness to his command over Arabic. The *Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha* even brings into prominence the unique style of the Shāh which is not only lucid, simple and direct but also the most appropriate for literary creations and expression of serious thoughts. No writer after Ibn Khaldūn can afford to bear comparison with the facile pen of Shāh Waliullah. It seems that the Shāh had, by himself, waded through those living and original works of Arabic literature which were free from the laboured pedantry of the non-Arab style of later period. His stay in Hijaz gave him an opportunity as if through a plan of the Providence, to prepare himself for his great literary works.[13] If the Shāh has not inadvertently missed to mention *Muqāmāt-i-Harīrī* from the course of study pursued by him, it was perhaps better that he did not go through it since the cobwebs spun by the previous generations of imitative writers unable to express their thoughts in a simple and direct style, show influence of the rhyming prose of al-Harīrī. All the writers after al-Harīrī had imitated his

style although his refinements had been rendered archaic with the passage of time: such was al-Harīrī's influence that even the legal dicta were phrased by the jurists in the same diction.

The Shāh says that he used to have a flow of ideas even in the days he was studying and this went on increasing gradually.[14] During the twelve years, after the death of his father when he taught the students different religious and rational subjects, he got the opportunity to reflect over a variety of issues.

Tutorship of Shāh's father

Shāh Waliullah says that his father was very kind to him—kinder than any father, teacher or spiritual guide can be to his ward.[15] His father used to teach in a way that his words sank into the heart of the listner. Once the Shāh wasted his day in sight-seeking with his friends. On his return, the Shāh reports, his father said, "Waliullah, did you do anything of lasting value during these twenty-four hours? I have recited *darūd* so many times today" The Shāh, as he says, lost all interest in excursions and thereafter never wasted his time in that manner.[16] His father used to pay particular attention in instructing the Shāh about prudence, etiquettes and cool-headedness. The Shāh had been instructed by his father to take precedence in saluting those who were lowly and to be kind and courteous to them. He had also warned the Shāh against taking a fancy to any particular dress or mode of expression, or showing aversion to a thing edible. His every desire had to be based, as the Shāh's father had told him, not on seeking any pleasure but on following some *sunnah* of the holy Prophet, or meeting any need, or promoting oneself in wisdom and morals. He had also told the Shāh that nothing in his mode of sitting or walking should be indicative of indolence or fatigue. Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm was, according to Shāh Waliullah, prudent and courageous, efficient in management of his affairs, zealous in religious matters and moderate in temperament. Shāh Waliullah had inherited all these qualities of his father.

Shāh Waliullah was also initiated by his father into his

spiritual order at the age of fourteen years. He instructed the Shāh in the methods of contemplation and self-edification, and also endued him with the robe of mystics. Shāh Waliullah was of seventeen years when his father died. During his last illness Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm permitted the Shāh to enroll novices to his spiritual order and to guide them. He had remarked on the occasion: "His hand is like unto my own."[17]

Marriage

Shāh Waliullah's age was only fourteen when his father got him married to the daughter of the Shāh's maternal uncle Shaikh 'Ubaid Ullah Siddiqi of Phulat. Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm was pressed to postpone the marriage for the time-being but he insisted on performance of the ceremony. Subsequent events, particularly the bereavements Shāh's family had to face, proved the wisdom of Shāh's father. If the marriage had been postponed once, it would have been deferred for a long time.[18] The first son born to his wife was Shaikh Muhammad. The Shāh himself schooled his son and wrote a primer for him. Later on Shaikh Muhammad studied the *Shamail Tirmidhi* along with Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz under the same teacher.[19] Shāh Muhammad migrated to Budhana after the death of his father and died there in 1208/1793. He was buried in the courtyard of the Jami Mosque of Budhana.[20] It was because of his eldest son that the Shāh was also known as Abu Muhammad [21] Two sons of Shāh Muhammad are reported by some to have been buried near him while others claim that he was issueless. In his three letters to Shāh Abu Sa'eed of Rae-Bareli, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz has conveyed the good wishes of his elder brother Shāh Muhammad to him. These letters speak of the great regard Shāh 'Abdul 'Aziz had for Shāh Muhammad.[22]

Second Marriage

After the death of his first wife Shāh Waliullah married Bibi Irādat, the daughter of Saiyid Thanā Ullah of Panipat who is reported to be a descendant of Saiyid Nāsir-ud-din Shahīd.[23]

Bibi Irādat was the mother of the Shah's four sons—Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, Shāh Raf'i-ud-din, Shāh 'Abdul Qādir and Shāh 'Abdul Ghani—who can be rightly called the four pillars of Islamic revival in India. The Shāh had also a daughter Ummat-ul-'Azīz by his second wife who was married to Muhammad Fā'iq b. Muhammad 'Āshiq of Phulat. Her descendants still reside in India.

Pilgrimage voyage

The Shāh's journey for the pilgrimage and stay in Hijaz is a landmark of crucial importance in his subsequent intellectual and reformative endeavour. During his stay in Hijaz which extended to a period of more than a year, he equipped himself thoughtfully in a way that was scarcely possible in India. The Shāh required a centre of learning, a place where the savants from every part of the Islamic world had converged for the sharpening of his wits He undertook a deep study of the *hadith* in Hijaz under the most erudite scholars which later on became the cornor-stone of his revivalist campaign. His studies also helped him to equip himself in comprehending the secrets and wisdom of the *shari'ah* to a degree not attained by anyone during the few hundred years in the past.

The Shāh was thirty years of age[21] when he set out for the pilgrimage. The fact that he had made up his mind to go for the *haj* during a time of unsettled political conditions and lawlessness prevailing in the country and frequent piracies in high seas speaks of his courage and attachment to the sacred Mosques. The Shāh also wanted to study the conditions in other Muslim countries before deciding his course of action for the defence of Islam in India. Most probably he had the Quranic instruction for acquiring knowledge—*that they may witness things that are of benefit to them*—in his mind for he wanted to benefit from the experiences of the learned and wise from all parts of the world converging in the centre of Islam.

Sūrat was then the sea-port for ships sailing for Arabia but the entire route, particularly Malwa and Gujarat were hunting

grounds of Maratha marauders. The great distance from the north to the south India had in those days to be covered on carts driven by bulls or camels.[25] Indian seas were also infested by a most formidable breed of European pirates, cheifly English and Portugese, who practised fiendish cruelty on the people, men, women and children. The hardships undergone by the *hāj* pilgrims can be seen in the few travelogues of the time that have survived. The journey within the country was no less hazardous. The Shāh says that whenever anybody accompanying his party was missing during the night, he started reciting the litany of *Yā Badī'ul-Ajā'ib* for his safety.

The ship boarded by the Shāh took forty-five days to reach Jiddah and he reached Makkah on the 15th of Dhi Q'ada. He also started delivering lectures within the Holy Mosque, near the place allocated to the Hanafite Imām. It was a great success since the number of people who flocked to listen him was quite large.[26]

The Shāh writes in the *Al-Juz'-al-Latīf:* "I had a great yearning to perform the *hej* during 1143/1730-31 which was accomplished by the end of that year. During the succeeding year I did homage to God at the K'aba, paid a visit to Medina, studied *hadīth* under Shaikh Abu Tāhir Madani and other scholars of the two holy cities, was bestowed a robe by Shaikh Abu Tāhir Madani who perhaps combined all the different mystic orders in his person and performed the *haj* a second time by the end of the year. Early in 1145/1732 I was again on the move for India and I reached my home (at Delhi) safely on the 10th Rajab 1145/16th December 1732."[27]

Mentors of the Shāh

In the *Insān-al-'Āyen fi Mashā'ikh al-Harmayn*, written by Shāh Waliullah in the memory of his teachers in the two sacred cities, he has given a bit detailed account of Shaikh Abu Tāhir Muhammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Kurdi-al-Madani for whom he had a great regard and affection. His description of these men of learning shows that the guides on the path of spirit leave an

indelible mark on the character and morals of intelligent students.

As the Shāh says Shaikh Abu Tāhir Muhammad al-Kurdi had first studied *hadīth* under his own father Shaikh Ibrāhīm al-Kurdi, and then from Shaikh Hasan Ujaimi.[28] Shaikh Abu Tāhir also got instruction from Ahmad Nakhali and took lessons in *Shamāil-i-Nabawi* and *Musnad Imām Ahmad* from Shaikh 'Abdullah Basari for two months. He was permitted to transmit the *ahādīth* contained in the works of Mullah 'Abdul Hakīm of Sialkot and Shaikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddith of Delhi by Shaikh 'Abdullah of Lahore. He was also taught a quarter of *Fath-ul-Bāri* and certain other Arabic works by Shaikh Sa'eed of Kokan.[29]

Muhsin b. Yahya Turhati relates in the *Al-Yān'i al-Janni* that Shaikh Abu Tāhir often remarked that Shāh Waliullah was instructed by him in the recital of the *ahādīth*, while he had himself benefited from the Shāh in understanding their import. He also mentioned it in the certificate he granted to Shāh Waliullah.[30]

Shaikh Abu Tāhir was an eminent scholar of *hadīth*, yet he was a man perfect in spirit who never relished criticism of the mystics. Shāh Waliullah reports that when he sought leave of Shaikh Abu Tāhir to return home, he recited a couplet, saying:

I have forgotten all other paths,
Save the one that leads to thy hearth.

Shaikh Abu Tāhir was pleased to get an almost similar reply from Shāh Waliullah. Shāh 'Abul 'Azīz relates that his father had replied, "Forgotten is whatever I had ever read except *hadīth* and religious lore."[31]

Shāh Waliullah's subsequent life and his engagements bear testimony to the fact that he had spoken the truth. *Of the believers are men who are true to that which they covenanted with Allah.*[32]

Shaikh Abu Tāhir died[33] in Ramadhan 1145/February 1733, that is, about two months after the Shāh reached his home. His father, Shaikh Ibrāhim Kaur'ani[34] was a fan of Ibn Taimiyah, always defending the latter whenever any body criticized him.

Saiyid N omān Khair-ud-din Ālūsi writes in the *Jal'ā-al-'Aynain fi-Mahākamat-al-Ahmadain* about Shaikh Kaurāni.

> "He belonged to the Salafi school and defended Shaikh-ul-Islam Ibn Taimiyah. Similarly, he would explain away these expressions of the mystics which apparantly alluded to in-dwelling, unity or essentiality (of human soul with God)."[35]

The advocacy and acclamation of Shaikh-ul-Islam Ibn Taimiyah in the writings of Shāh Waliullah should have come from the influence of Shaikh Abu Tāhir and his father Shaikh Ibrāhim Kaurāni just as he is more often inclined to adopt a conciliatory attitude in several other matters like his own father.

Another scholar of *hadīth* who certified competence of the Shāh in that discipline was Shaikh Tāj-ud-din Qala'i, the Mufti of Makkah, who had been the disciple of Shaikh 'Abdullah b. Sālim of Egypt and Shaikh 'Ujaimi. He attended the lectures of Shaikh Tāj-ud-din on Bukhāri for three days and heard his recital of several other *hadīth* collections.[36]

During his stay in Hijaz the Shāh received instruction in *Muwatta* of Yahya b. Yahya from Shaikh Muhammad Wafd Ullah. He also granted a certificate of proficieny to the Shāh in the *hadith* compilation of his father Shaikh Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Sulaimān al-Maghribi.[37]

The Shāh had earlier attended the lectures of Shaikh Muhammad Afzal of Sialkot, the most erudite scholar of *hadīth* in India.[38] Shaikh Muhammad Afzal had undergone schooling under Shaikh Sālim 'Abdullah Basri and Shaikh 'Abdul Ahad Ibn Khwaja Muhammad Sa'eed Sarhindi, and was the lecturer in *hadīth* in Madrasa Ghāzi-ud-din Khān at Delhi. He had also taught *hadīth* to Mirza Mazhar Jān-i-Jānān and guided him in the spiritual discipline.[39]

The Shāh was accompanied by his maternal uncle Shaikh 'Ubaid Ullah of Bārha and a cousin Shaikh Muhammad 'Āshiq in the pilgrimage. He learnt of his mother's death at Makkah while he was on his way back to India.[40]

Shāh Waliullah was a keen student of *hadīth* and the two

holy cities offered him the best opportunity to pursue his studies there as well as to instruct others who came there for the purpose from different parts of the Islamic world. The merit of offering prayers in the two sacred Mosques and unsettled conditions in India which was gradually slipping from the hands of long established Muslim rule to the grip of a foreign power were some of the additional reasons that would have provided a justification for the Shāh to opt for permanent settlement in the holy land. But he decided to return to India since divine Providence had earmarked for him the glorious role of a reformer and renovator of faith in his homeland. He had in fact received an indication of his future course of action from the holy Prophet. He had the premonition: "It is ordained by God that the Muslims would be enabled to consolidate themselves through you."[41]

The Shāh was pre-disposed to make India the centre of his intellectual and religious endeavours and wanted those closer to him to do likewise. It was the country where the earlier Muslims had worked hard to serve the cause of religion and education, had produced great scholars and saints in different eras of its history, and the country was also destined to become the centre of *hadīth* and other religious disciplines. One of the students of the Shāh was Makhdūm Moin-ud-din Sindhi. When Sindhi expressed his desire to settle down in Hijaz, the Shāh wrote to him:

> "As regards your intention not to return to your homeland, do not take any final decision nor insist on it until you or one closer to you finds an inspiration in his heart in this matter."[42]

Teaching of Hadīth

On his return from Hijaz, Shāh Waliullah started teaching *hadīth* in the Madrasa Rahīmiyah, the school established by his father in the locality now known as Mehndiyān in old Delhi. His lectures soon attracted students from other madrasas in such large numbers that the Madrasa Rahīmiyah proved insufficient to accommodate all of them. Emperor Muhammad Shāh,

despite his numerous faults and failings, provided a spacious building to the Shah for his madrasa in the new city, where he started teaching *hadith* to his students. Maulvi Bashīr-ud-din writes about this madrasa.[43]

> 'The madrasa, occupying a spacious and imposing building, was regarded as an institution of higher learning in those days. It remained in that state until the time of Great Revolt when it was demolished and people took away its logs and doors."

He also says :

> "Several houses were built on its site but the place is still known as Madrasa Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz."

The reminiscences of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz contain a reference to the mosque of the madrasa in these words :

> 'During the days I was born a number of persons purer of soul, who happened to be friends of my father, like Shāh Muhammad 'Āshiq, Molvi Nūr Muhammad and others used to reside in this mosque for prayers (duing the last ten days of Ramadhan)."[44]

Hakim 'Abdul Hai, the author of *Nuzhatul Khwātir*, who went to Delhi in 1312/1894-95, has left the follow aecount dated 26th Rajab/ January 23, 1895, in his diary.

> "After attending the leeture of Syed Nazīr Husain, I had a mind to pay a visit to the madrasa of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz where a number of my ancestors had received education for I deemed it an honour to perform the meanest task at the place.[45] I went to Jama Masjid and thence to Chitli Qabar where the road branches off into two lanes. The one on the right hand leads straight to the Khanqah.[46] I went in the lane which leads to Kūcha Faulād Khān on the left side. This road goes ahead to Kalān Mahal. Here in Kalān Mahal was the madrasa of our most respected Shaikh. It brought to my mind: ".....who, passing by a township which had fallen into utter ruin, exclaimed : How shall Allah give this township life after its

death ?"[47] God bless me, what on the earth ! Once students from Arabia and Iran converged at this place and derived benefit from here. Now it is all in ruins, nobody lives here."[48]

Hakim 'Abdul Hai also cites Syed Zahīr-ud-din, a descendant of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, as having told him that the madrasa was earlier in Mehndiyān near the graves of the Shāh's family members. When Shāh Waliullah was provided the building in the new city after the death of Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm, he shifted to the new madrasa and lived there for the rest of his life.[49]

Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz's Description of His Father

There is no contemporary biography or any other writing describing the daily routine of Shāh Waliullah except the reminiscences of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz in which brief references have been made at several places about his father.

Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz says that he had never seen a man with such a strong memory as his father. He adds that he had heard about such persons but never seen anyone like him.[50] A man of great scholarship as he was, he was also so diligent that when he sat down to work after *ishrāq*, he did not move from the place until it was mid-day.[51] He had trained his disciples in different branches of learning to whom he had entrusted the task of teaching students. He used to explain the intricate points of different disciplines to those advanced in learning or spent his time in writing, or study of *hadīth* or delivering lectures. He always took down whenever any new idea crossed his mind or he had an intuition. Of robust health he seldom fell ill.[52] Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz also says that his grandfather was a practising physician. Shāh Waliullah had given up the family profession, but he often went through the books of Tibb.[53] He had a literary bent of mind and often recited a few verses, though the verses recited could be seldom classed as mystic poetry.[54]

Death

At last the day came when this great luminary who had spent

about you and told others how during the depredations of Abdāli army you intervened and brought about peace and tranquillity.[59] Perhaps the Shāh wanted to meet you during his last days, for, he once said to me, "Mīr Abu Sa'eed wanted to come here. It would be better if he comes early."

"My dear, now you cannot meet the Shāh, but his writings which are ninety or even more in number on religious sciences, that is, *Tafsīr* (exegesis) and *Usūl* (principles of exegesis), *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) and *Kalām* (theological dialectics) and *hadith* are dealt with in the *Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha*, *Asrār-i-Fiqh*, *Mansūr*,[60] *Izālat al-Khifa 'an-Khilāfatu-al-Khulfā* and translation of the Qur'ān. Each one of these consists of eighty or ninety folds. His description of spiritual realities in tracts like *Altāf-al-Quds*, *Hamaāt*, *Fuyūz-al-Haramayn* and *Anfās al-'Ārifīn* are indicative of his inward perfection and grace. If you decide to get them copied for dissemination, the task can be accomplished with a little attention. Only God knows if such books have ever been written as asserted by certain erudite scholars. On whatever topic the Shāh wrote anything, he has laid down the fundamental principles of that subject.

"This humble self as well as the sons of the Shāh and his friends hope that soon after you come to know of this calamitous event, you would leave for Delhi to visit his grave and pray for him. I am thus awaiting your arrival here, and if you happen to come early, I would deem it my good fortune to meet you here. If, however, you are likely to take some time in coming here, let me know of it so that I may leave for home.

"Another matter to be mentioned is that Miān Muhammad 'Āshiq has asked me to convey his wishes to you and also expressed the desire that you may send him

copies of letters addressed to you by the Shāh so that they may also be included in his compilation. Miān Ahlullah. the sons of the Shāh and his friends want me to convey their greetings to you.

"I had told the Shāh about the illness and death of brother Mohammad Moin[61] at Budhana. He had expressed his grief and prayed for the salvation of his soul."[62]

Shāh Waliullah died on Saturday in the afternoon of 29th Muharram 1176/21 August, 1762, as stated by Shāh 'Abdul 'Āzīz in his reminiscences.

"He died on 29th Muharram. The year of his death can be calculated from the chronogram *Aū Buwad Imām-i-'Āzam-i-Dīn* (He was the great leader of religion) and *Hāi Dil-i-Rozgār Raft*[63] (Ah! the core of the Age has gone)."[64]

The Shāh was buried at the place called Mehndiyān to the right of Delhi gate.[65] The place occupied by this graveyard was once the site of a hospice of Shaikh 'Abdul 'Azīz, a maternal grand-father of Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm. The grave of Shaikh 'Abdul 'Azīz still exists at a little distance. Shaikh Raf'ī-ud-din had taken up residence there since the ancestors of Shāh Waliullah had built their houses in that locality. Shāh Waliullah had abandoned the place and moved into the city then known as Shāhjahānabād. The place was later converted into a family graveyard where Shāh Waliullah, his four sons as well as his father Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm were buried. The tombstones give the years of their death. There are also graves of other members of his family, both men and women. Nearby is a mosque around which there are graves of a large number of saints and scholars or those related to the family of Shāh Waliullah. The number of graves in this cemetery goes on increasing day by day.

Notes and References:

1 Shāh Waliullah has happily given all the necessary details regard-

ing his education, tutorship by his own father, informal education on path of spirit, journey to Hijaz and the meetings with eminent personalities in that country, albeit briefly, in his autobiography. Two more sources of his biographical details are *Al-Juz-al-Latīf fi-Tarjumatil 'Abd-al-Zay'if* and *Insān-al-'Ayen fi-Mashā'ikh al-Haramayan.* The details given here have been taken from these works as well as *Anfās-al-'Ārifīn* and *Al-Qaul al-Jali.*

2. *Al-Juz-al-Latīf,* Lahore, n. d., p. 2.
3. *Anfas al-'Ārifīn,* pp. 62-63.
4. *Al-Qaul-al-Jali,* MSS, Khanqāh Kazimiyah, Kakori.
5. *Anfās-al-'Ārifīn,* p 44.
6. *Ibid,* p. 63.
7. *Al-Juz-al-Latīf,* p. 2.
8. *Ibid.,* p. 2.
9. *Ibid.,* p. 3
10. *Ibid.,* p. 3.
11. *Ibid.,* p. 3.
12. For a detailed study of the changes made from time to time in the curriculum of Arabic educational institutions, Hakim Syed 'Abdul Hai's *As-Thaqafat al-Islāmiyah fil-Hind* can be seen. It was published from Damascus and a Urdu brochure on the same subject entitled *Hindustān ke Nizām-i-Dars Aur Uske Taghaiyurāt* has been brought out from Lucknow.
13. "The Shāh," says the *Al-Y'anī al-Janni,* "during his stay in Hijaz learnt to speak chaste and lucid Arabic through his conversation with the Arabs."
14. *Al-Juz-al-Latīf,* p. 3.
15. *Ibid.,* p. 3.
16. *Anfās-al-'Ārifīn,* p. 63.
17. *Al-Juz-al-Latīf,* p. 3.
18. Shāh Waliullah says that shortly after his marriage his mother-in-law died and subsequent deaths in the family were those of his maternal-grandmother, a cousin named Shāh Fakhr 'Alam and then his step-mother.
19. *Nuzhatul Khawātir,* Vol. VI.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Al-Irshād fi Muhimmāt al-Isnād.*

22. *Maktūb-al-Ma'ārif*, MSS., pp. 16-18.

23. We find a mention of Syed Nāsir-ud-din Shahīd on pages 281-90 of Ahmad 'Ali Khairābādi's *Qasr-i-'Ārifān* (published by Dr. Muhammad Bāqir in 1965). He is reported to be the son of Imām Bāqir Zain-ul-'Ābidīn and brother of Imām J'afar Sādiq. Ahmad 'Ali Khairābādi says that Nāsir-ud-dīn Shahīd came to Khurāsān from a place known as Wāsit, and then to Gazni from where be bended his steps to Qannauj with a retinue of 67 cavalry (whose names have also been given by the author). In 146 A. H. he is reported to have arrived in Sonipat during the reign of Sultan Shihāb-ud-din Ghori. Nāsīr-ud-din was then Governor of the province. A local Raja Arjun Dev wanted to purchase the horses of Syed Nāsir-ud-din, but as the offer was rejected by the latter, a battle ensued in which Arjun Dev was defeated but Syed Nāsir-ud-din died fighting with Arjun Dev's brother Har Har Dev on 12th Muharram, 147 A.H.

The details given above do not appear to be correct since Muslim arms had not gone beyond Sind and Multan by the year 147 A H. Mansūrah became the capital of Muslim possessions in Sind by the end of the third century or in the opening decades of the fourth century. Mahmūd of Ghazna ascended the throne in 387 A. H. and he first attacked India in 381 A. H. Shihāb-ud-din Muhammad Ghori in whose reign Syed Nāsir-ud-din is reported to have come to India, first attacked the country in 572-73 A. H. and finally won the battle against Prithivi Raj Chauhān in 588 A. H. No other work mentions Imām Nāsir-ud-din as the son of Imām Muhammad Bāqir. However, he is reported as 22nd descendant of Imām Muhammad Bāqir by certain other writers. Thus the account given by the author of *Qasr-i-'Ārifān* is not correct, but Syed Nāsir-ud-din was a martyr as established by local traditions (the date of death not being certain). His descendants were closely related to the family of Shāh Waliullah.

24. It appears from the *Al-Qaul-al-Jali fi-Manāqib al-Wali* that the Shāh had earlier taken a trip at the age of twenty years for performance of the *haj*. When he reached the sea-port, he found that all the ships had embarked and none was available. He was left with no choice save to stay for sometime at Khambat where during a contemplative self-communion, he reached a spiritual state which made him give up the journey and return home. It is reported that he was bidden to return home by the holy Prophet.

25. It appears from the (*Malfūzāt*) reminiscences of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz

that Shāh Waliullah had passed through Rajputana also (pp. 73).

26. *Al-Qaul al-Jali*, (MSS).
27. *Al-Juz-al-Latīf*, p.5.
28. *Al-Insān al-'Ayen* gives his name as Shaikh Hasan 'Ajami which appears to be a printing mistake. His surname was Ujaimi as stated in *Al-'Ālām* Vol. II, p. 223 by Zarkali.
29. *Al-Insōn al-'Ayen*, p. 13.
30. *Al-Yani al-Janni*
31. *Malfūzēt Hazrat Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz*, p. 93.
32. Q. 33 : 23.
33. *Al-Insān-al-'Ayen*, p 14.
34. Born in 1025 AH, he died in 1101 AH and wrote more than 80 works.
35. *Jalā-al-'Aynain*, Matb'at-al-Madani, Egypt, p. 41.
36. *Al-Insān-al-'Ayen*, pp. 15-16.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 7
38. *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. VI.
39 *Ibid.*,
40. *Al-Qaul-al-Jali* (MSS)
41. *Fuyūz-al-Harmain*, Matba Ahmadi, Delhi, p. 62.
42. *Hayēt Wali*, (Letters of Shāh Waliullah) p. 536, Matb'a Salfiyah, Lahore.
43. Bashir-ud-din, *Dōr-ul-Hukūmat Delhi*, Vol. II, p. 286.
44. *Malfūzēt Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz*, p, 109, Mujtabai Press, Meerut.
45. The writer has given names of several persons among his ancestors who had received education at the Madrasa during the time of Shāh Wali Ullah and Shāh Abdul Aziz.
46. That is, the Khanqah of Shāh Ghulām 'Ali. Now it is known as Shāh 'Abdul Khair Marg.
47. Q 2 : 259.
48. Hakīm 'Abdul Hai, *Delhi Aur Uske Atrōf*, Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu, Delhi, pp. 63-64.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
50. *Malfūzēt*, p. 11. (The Publisher of the work, Muhammad Bashir-ud-din Siddiqi could not find the title originally given to his reminiscenes by Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, but there is sufficient internal evidence to show that is was written by Shāh Abdul Azīz himself).
51. *Malfūzāt*, p. 43.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
55. Q. 3 : 185
56. *Malfūzēt Shāh 'Abdul 'Aziz* (Urdu) Hāshmi Press, Meerut, p. 56, states that the Shāh was born on the 4th Shawwal, 1114, A. H. and

died on 29th Muharram 1176 A H. and thus he died at the age of 61 year, and four months. The year of death can be computed from *Imām 'Azam-i-Dīn.*

57. Saiyid Muhammad N'omān was the great grandson of Shāh 'Alam Ullah, the genealogical table being : N'oman b. Nūr b. Huda b. 'Alam Ullah. He was born at Nasīrabad in Rae Bareli. After receiving education at the place of his birth, he completed his formal studies under 'Abdullah of Amethi in Lucknow. He received spiritual instruction from Saiyid Muhammad b. Shāh 'Alam Ullah and after his death was guided by Saiyid Muhammad 'Adl *alias* Shāh L'al, the son of Saiyid Muhammad. Thereafter he attached himself for spiritual guidance to other spiritual disciples of Shāh Alam Ullah and then Shāh Waliullah. He was present at Delhi at the time Shāh Waliullah died. After the Shāh's death, he went abroad for pilgrimage and then to Bait-ul-Muqaddas and died on his way to Al-Khalil (where the grave of Prophet Ibrāhim still exists) in 1193/17 and was buried in Jerusalem (*Nuzhatul-Khawātir*, Vol. VI).

58. 89 : 28

59. The details of the event to which a reference is made is not known.

60. The book referred to is not clear.

61. Saiyid Muhammad Moin b. Saiyid Muhammad Zīā b. Shāh 'Alam Ullah was a cousin of Shāh Abu Sa'eed. He was elder than Shāh Abu Sa'eed and died in 1176 A. H.

62. *Maktūb al-Ma'ārif* (MSS), pp. 19-20.

63. According to Nūr-ul-Hasan Rāshid the correct phrase is *Hēi Wali-i-Rozgār Raft*, i. e. Ah! the saint of the Age has gone. (*Burhān*, Delhi, July 1983).

64. *Malfūzāt Hazrat Shāh 'Abdul 'Āzīz*, Meerut, 1314 A. H., p. 40.

65. "It was a building", according to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, "which had shops and arches in the ground floor and was decorated by four cupolas on its four corners. Nobody knows who built it or for what purpose but it is commonly believed that a certain Nawab used to erect Mehndiyān, a structure of bamboo strips mounted with paper, which was lighted inside with a candle in the honour of 'Abdul Qādir Jilāni. It was this custom of the Nawab which gave its name to the building, but nobody knows who this Nawab was". (*Athār-us-Sanādid*), Lucknow, 1876, pp. 50-51.

V

Reformative Endeavour of Shah Waliullah

Scope of Shāh's Reformative Work

The reformatory endeavour of the Shāh comprising propagation of the true content of faith, dissemination of teachings brought by the prophets and reinvigoration of the Muslim community with a fresh thought and ambition, was so wide in its scops and multi-dimentional in nature that we fail to find a similar effort having been made by anyone among his contemporaries or even among the learned and the savants of the old. This may be due, apart from the will of God, to the prevailing conditions during the time of Shāh Waliullah. The comprehensiveness of his literary endeavour, his vaulting ambition and his peculiar way of teaching and preaching led him to direct his reformatory and revivalist efforts to such varied fields of life that his biographer will find it difficult to adequately enumerate his accomplishments. However, we can divide his reformatory efforts into following fields.

1. Reform of the creed and call to the Qur'ān.
2. Propagation of *hadith* and the *sunnah* and integration of *fiqh* with *hadīth*.
3. Reinterpretation of the Islamic *sharī'ah* and exposition of the wisdom underlying *hadith* and *sunnah*.

4. Elucidation of the theory of Caliphate, its basic characteristics and refutation of Shi'ite view in this regard.
5. Leading role played by him during the era of confusion following the decay of Moghul empire.
6. Admonition of different sections of Muslim society and inviting them to reform themselves
7. Providing instruction and training to a selected group of scholars for taking ahead the reformatory work initiated by him.

We shall first take up the Shāh's effort for restoration of the articles of belief and his call to the Qur'an since every revivalist endeavour at any place or time will have to accord priority to these. Any effort for regeneration of the Muslim community without inviting the people back to Qur'an will be inconclusive and fruitless. The Quranic description of the prophets and the biographical accounts of the earlier scholars who followed the prophets in the propagation of faith and morals leave no doubt that the revivalist efforts to the end of time shall have to follow the prophetic pattern indicated by the Qur'an.

Significance of creed

We would better give here an extract from our another work delineating the fundamental nature of creed in Islam.

> "The emphasis placed primarily in this religion is on the creed of monotheism; from Adam to Muhammad (peace be on them) every prophet demanded faith in this creed; they were averse to making any compromise in this regard or to give up the least part of it.
>
> "Virtuous living and ethical conduct moderation, goodness, worthy social set up and exemplary form of government had no worth or merit unless one also subscribed to the creed preached by them. The creed was end and purpose of the life of each prophet. Their endeavour throughout their lives was to propagate and establish this basic creed. In fact, it constituted the dividing line between the thought,

character and labours of the prophets of God, on the one hand, and national leaders, politicians and revolutionaries, on the other.[1]

"The knowledge about the essence of Divine Being and His attributes is the most important and highest form of cognition that man has received through the prophets of God. For man does not possess even the primary perceptions in regard to mute reality, the prophets of God constitute the only source of acquiring knowledge about God. Reasoning cannot help man in this field since no resemblance of divine form or function is available to help him in his analogical deduction. Far from anything having affinity with God, who is Unique, the Absolute, the Incomparable, too sublime for perception by the faculties possessed by man, there remains nothing for his understanding or even imagination after deducting the unknown from all ideas of time and space, of motion and matter, of sensation and reflection of the material world.....Yet, this is the knowledge most essential and surpassing; on it depends the well-being of man and his salvation. It is not only the fountain of creed and morals and civilization, but also helps man to understand himself and the cosmos around him, to fathom the secrets of life, to determine his own place in the universe, to pattern his behaviour with his fellow beings and to define the goal and end of his life."[2]

The promise of God, in particular, to help the believers in attaining His propinquity and pleasure and love and respect of their fellow beings depends solely on unadulterated creed of monotheism. Says God;

"Fear not nor grieve, for ye will overcome them if ye are (indeed) believers."[3]

The same principle has been stated more explicity in another verse of the Qur'ān which reads :

"Allah hath promised such of you as believe and do good works that He will surely make them to succeed (the present rulers) in the earth even as He caused those who were before them to succeed (others); and He will surely establish for them their religion which He hath approved for them, and will give them in exchange safety after their fear. They serve Me. They ascribe no thing as partner unto Me. Those who disbelieve henceforth, they are the miscreants."[4]

The successors of the prophets of God, the angelic scholars, having an insight into the ideals and realities of religion, first prepare the soil for implanting the seed of faith and root out all traces of polytheism and infidelity (whether these are vestiges of the bygone cultures or products of local influences), irrespective of the time and labour involved in this herculean task. They never jump to achieve the ultimate end in view in a hurry.

"Idolatry and associating partners to God (paying divine honours, supplicating or prostrating before beings other than God or offering up an oblation to them) constitute the universal and eternal ignorance which has always been the greatest failing of man—a wickedness which has always been present within him. But, this is the sacrilege which provokes the indignation of God, bars the way of spiritual, moral and cultural progress of man and brings about his fall from the exalted place he occupies to the bottomless chasm of ungodliness".[5]

Rejuvenation of Creed—Always Essential

The writer of these lines had described the religious condition of the Muslims during the time of Imām Ibn Taimiyah in the second volume of the *Saviours of Islamic spirit* which throws light on the elemental need for making constant efforts to revitalise the monotheistic creed.

"Thoughts borrowed from the un-Islamic sources, irreligious precepts and dogmas fostered by the

> Ismailite Caliphate of Egypt and the pantheistic doctrines diffused by the illeterate and misguided *sufi* mystics had given birth to numerous heretical beliefs and customs in those days. The Muslim masses had begun to look up to their religious teachers of yore, saints and martyrs as intercessors with God in almost the same way as Ezra and Jesus Christ had been elevated to the pedestal of Divinity by the Jews and Christians. The tombs of Muslim saints presented the same spectacle—the same rituals, devotional services and oblations—as were commonly performed in martyries and sanctorums of other faiths. Muslims, too, invoked the aid of their saints rather than God: repaired to their graves in large numbers to celebrate the anniversaries of their death, constructed palatial buildings on their tombs, performed ceremonies implying reliance on them and perambulated around their shrines like the House of God."[6]

A graphic description of the perverted beliefs and practices in those days has been left by Imām Ibn Taimiyah.

> "……Supplications are offered to the departed saints to get their difficulties solved while the attendants are presumed to have the authority of declaring what is lawful or not under the *sharī'ah*……Many of these ignormuses could be seen offering prayers facing the tombs or beseeching the saints to take pity on them and pardon their sins. Some have even their backs towards the Ka'ba while offering prayers facing these graves: and when they are asked to desist from it they declare that the K'aba is meant to serve as a *qibla* for the laity while the elect and pure of heart need pay divine honours to the saints alone…… They poke fun at the unity of God and snear at the prayers offered to Him. They look with scorn upon *haj* and *hājees* and believe that the visit to the shrines of the saints is more estimable than the

performance of *haj*. Some are even insolent enough to trifle with the mosques and the prayers offered therein for they believe that the invocation of the blessings of their *shaikhs* carries greater merit than the prayers offered to God.....Without bestowing any care on the mosques which give a dull and deserted look, shrines are adorned with beautiful carvings and decorated with a splash of colour and aristic designs."[7]

These were the conditions prevailing in the countries like Egypt, Syria and Iraq which were adjacent to the centre of Islam and the last resting place of the holy Prophet, companions of the last Prophet had brought these lands to the threshold of Islam; their people spoke Arabic and never for a day religious scholars had left teaching and preaching the Qur'ān and the *hadīth* there; and monumental works on different branches of Islamic sciences had been written in those countries.

It should not be difficult to imagine the situation in the twelfth century India where Islam had reached through a circuitous route of Iran, Turkistan and Afghanistan after losing much of its strength and vigour. Those who brought Islam to India were also not totally free from their racial and national predispositions. Moreover, a philosophy, culture and religion with strong streaks of idolatry and polytheism had predominated India for several hundred years or rather made it the sole spokesman of that thought and way of life. A larger portion of the Muslims in India had entered the fold of Islam directly from the Brahmanic society which was steeped in polytheistic culture. It is also noteworthy that for a long time Indian Islam had paid more attention to Greek thought and philosophy, thanks to the domination of Iranian intellectual traditions, instead of re-establishing its link directly with the Qur'ān and the *hadīth*. Its schoolmen had been giving pride of place to jurisprudence and its principles and theological dialectics which were related more to logical disputations and philosophical discussions rather than rejuvenation of creed based on the Oneness of God.

The deep impress of Indian religious thoughts and philosophies as well as customs and traditions on the Muslim society of India can be seen from the letter[8] Majadid Alf Thāni wrote to a lady. It shows how Muslims participated in rituals involving polytheism, considered it permissible to supplicate beings other than God for help in their affairs, participated in idolatrous festivals and followed polytheistic customs and conventions, offered sacrifices of animals to placate the saints, fasted to propitiate different holy men and women and harboured the same credulous beliefs and irrational fear as the Hindus had in regard to *Sitla*, the goddess of small-pox. All these common features of Muslim society which carried weight even with the families of elites and educated persons, were the result of the Muslim intellectual circles not maintaining a direct contact with the Qur'ān and the *hadith*.

Influences exerted on the Muslim society by their non-Muslim neighbours coupled with general unfamiliarity with the Qur'ān and *hadith* and its teachings, and absence of any effort to take corrective measures, had gone to produce an eclectic Muslim culture challenging the monotheistic creed and Islamic way of life. Shāh Waliullah writes in the *Tafhimāt*:

> "The Prophet is reported to have said: 'You (Muslims) will take after the ways of the earlier communities and will follow them step by step so that if they enter the burrow of a lizard, you shall also follow suit.' The companions asked, 'O Prophet of Allah, do you mean the Jews and the Christians by earlier communities?' The Prophet replied, 'Who else!' This *hadith* has been reported by Bukhāri and Muslim.
>
> "The Prophet was perfectly correct for we have seen Muslims, weaker in faith, who have taken the pious as associates of God and converted the tombs of their saints into places of worship like the Jews and Christians. We have seen men who alter the precepts of the Prophet and impute the dictum to him that 'virtuous are for Allah and the sinners for me.' This

aphorism is similar to what the Jews claim: *The fire will most certainly not touch us for more than a limited number of days.*[9] The fact is that distortion is rampant in every group. Look at the *sūfis* and you will find maxims prevalent amongst them which do not agree with the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*. In regard to *tauhīd*, the Oneness of God in particular, they do seem to be absolutely careless."[10]

In one of his most celebrated works, the *Al-Fauz al-Kabīr*. Shāh Waliullah gives an account of the polytheistic practices of the infidels during the pagan past and then says:

"If you find it difficult to comprehend the creed and practices of the heathens look at all those who are bent upon defiling their faith although they are living in the land of Islam. See, what concepts they have about the saints of bygone ages. Even if they admit the saintliness of the earlier angelic souls, they consider the existence of such men of God now as improbable yet they keep paying a call on various tombs and shrines, indulging in heretical practices of ascribing divinity to them. They are so carried away by these deviations and delusions that they present a true picture of what the Prophet said: *You will take after the ways of the earlier communities*.....There is not a misadventure on which one or the other group of Muslims dares not enter upon or entertains beliefs of a similar nature. May Allah parden all of us."[11]

The Remedial Measure

The remedial measure suggested by Shāh Waliullah for the widespread corruption was study and contemplation on the Qur'ān. It was not his intelligence or academic analysis or ingenuity that led him to this conclusion; it was a self-evident reality, a truth attested by the Qur'ān, the history of Islam and experience of reformative endeavours in the past. The reality of *tauhīd* and *shirk* could not be expounded more forcefully and

convincingly by anything than the Qur'ān itself. Shāh 'Abdul Qādir has expressed this very characteristic of the Book of God in his Urdu rendering of the scripture entitled *Mūzeh al-Qur'ān* in these words :

> "Let those who can explain do it to the best of their ability but none can elucidate like God. No exposition by any one can be as efficacious and moving as the word of God."[12]

During his stay in Hijaz, Shāh Waliullah must have keenly felt the differ nce between the authentic teachings of the Qur'ān and Islam and the practices of Indian Muslims. The cradle of Islam radiant with spiritual effulgence of the Qur'ān, must have given rise to an overpowering impulse in him to make his countrymen familiar with the true teachings of the divine scripture. We can also take it as an inspiration or divine hint usually felt by those purer in spirit for serving the cause of religion. This was perhaps the reason that the Shāh commenced a Persian rendering of the Holy Qur'ān under the title of *Fath ur-Rahmān* after he came back from Hijaz.[13]

India was then intellectually a part of the landmass comprising Turkistan, Iran and Afghanistan ; thoughts and attitudes of its neighbouring countries were exerting influence on the religious and educational circles of India. The then assumption in these lands was that comprehension of the Qur'ān being dependent on a dozen or more branches of learning, only the learned were worthy of devoting themselves to the study of the Qur'ān, scanning its meanings and contemplating upon its hidden wisdom. It was considered dangerous to allow the common people to take up its study or try to imbibe its teachings since that might open the doors of misinformation and blunder. The then scholars also feared that once the commonality had direct access to the Qur'ān, it would start defying the authority of the learned besides getting self-conceited and involved in mental confusion. The dominant thought and the arguments advanced in the matter have been neatly summarised by Shāh Waliullah in one of his brochures entitled *Tuhfah al-Muwahhidin*.[14]

There are people who say that the Qur'ān and the *hadīth* can be understood only by one who is conversant with different branches of learning and has studiously gone through a large number of books. In short he should be a master intellect of his age. To these persons God's reply is: *He it is Who hath sent among the unlettered ones a messenger of their own, to recite unto them His revelations and to purify them and to teach them the Scripture and Wisdom.*"[15]

This means that neither the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) nor his companions knew the art of reading and writing but when the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) recited the Quranic verses before his companions they got themselves disabused of every vile and wrong. So, if an illiterate man cannot understand the Qur'ān and the *hadīth*, or is incapable of comprehending its teachings, how the companions were able to get rid of their corruption? Lamentable are those who have the pretentions of getting to the bottom of the *Sidrah* and *Qamūs* but plead their incompetence to follow the Qur'ān and the *hadīth*. There are also those amongst them who plead that they are the rearmost of the *ummah*, unblessed with the purity of heart and spirit enjoyed by the companions and contemporaries of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), then how can they grasp the substance of the Qur'ān and the *hadīth*. To such persons Allah has already given an answer: *And also others of them who have not yet joined them.*[16] These words read in continuation of the verse cited earlier leave no doubt that all those to come later on, whether they are literate or not, will be cleansed if they decide to learn the Qur'ān and the *hadīth* and follow in the footsteps of the Prophet's companions. Allah also says: *And assuredly We have made the Quran easy for admonition; is there*

any one who would be admonished.[17] How fallacious this would be if those learned in the *Kāfiah* and *Shāfiyah* were incompetent to make out its meaning while uncivilized Arabs were able to grasp it. The Qur'ān asks: '*Will they then not meditate on the Qur'ān?*'[18] How could anybody meditate on the Qur'ān if it were not easy or, as the Qur'ān asks, '*are there locks upon their hearts?*[19]' But if there are no locks upon their hearts why have they become so impervious to every argument and evidence inviting them to ponder over the writ of God."[20]

Taking a note of the then anomalous thought and deviant tenor bordering to the Quranic expressions about those who turned away from the way of Allah,[21] the Shāh resolved to render the holy Qur'ān into an easy Persian idiom since it was the official and literary language and was extensively used by the educated people for their correspondence ever since the establishment of Muslim rule in India. Even those who were not so well-versed in Persian could at least follow it thanks to the dominant position enjoyed by it for the last seven hundred years. It would have not been surprising at all if even a dozen of Persian translations had been attempted by that time, but no record of any such rendering exists save one by Hasan b. Muhammad 'Alqami, popularly known as Nizām of Nishāpūr or Daulatābād, who was a scholar of the eighth century Hijrah. This Persian translation by Nishāpurī is included in his Arabic commentary on the holy Qur'ān known as the *Gharā'ib-al-Qur'ān.*[22]

Another Persian translation of the Qurān found in India was commonly attributed to Shaikh S'adi. It was not popular like Sa'di's *Gulistān* and *Bostān,* and was also rare. However, it is incorrect to credit S'adi with this work;—it was decidedly undertaken by Syed Sharīf 'Ali al-Jurjāni (d. 816/1413). 'Abdul Haq Haqqāni, the author of the *Tafsir-i-Haqqāni* writes in the introduction to his work: "The translation regarded as that by Shaikh S'adi by the ignormuses these days is in reality the work of Syed

Sharīf. It was in my presence that the publisher attributed it to Shaikh S'adi just to make it popular."[23]

In short, after five years of his return from Hijaz, and perhaps in consequence of the results achieved through his efforts to rectify the popular creed of the people through sermons and teaching and preaching, the Shāh came to the conclusion that the most potent and effective method of popularising the teachings of the Qur'ān was to have a Persian rendering of the scripture Shāh Waliullah has given a detailed description of the reasons for his venture in the introduction to the *Tafsīr Fath-ur-Rahmān*.

> "The times in which we are living and the country which we inhabit demand that the well-being of Muslims lies in an easy and idiomatic Persian translation of the holy Qur'ān (without burdening it with an exquisite style and unnecessary stories and interpretations) so that it may be easily understood alike both by the commonality and the worthy. All should be able to get at the message of the Qur'ān. Hence the heart of this mendicant was spurred, rather overpowered to take up this job.
>
> "First of all the existing translations were gone through so that the one measuring up to expectation, and in accordance with the prevailing taste may be published. But these translations either contain tedious details or are crudely sketchy. In the meantime the translation of *Sūratul Baqarah* and *Sūratun Nisa* was completed. Thereafter I happened to proceed for the pilgrimage which disrupted the work. A few years after that a student started studying the Qur'ān under me which revived the earlier resolve. I decided to pen down the translation I had to teach every day and in this way one-third of translation was completed. Then the student had to undertake a journey which again suspended the work. A long time after that the desire to complete the translation was reawakened resulting in completion of two-third of the work.

"Certain friends were then requested to copy the manuscript in a clear hand along with the text These friends started writing in Dhil-Hijja, 1150 (March-April, 1738) which induced me to take up the task again. It was thus completed by the beginning of Ramadhan 1151 (November, 1738) and a clear copy came to be prepared within the same year. The book was released through the efforts of Khwaja Muhammad Amīn, in the year 1156 (1743) when several copies of it were prepared and utilized for teaching the students and the contemporary scholars gave recognition to it."[24]

In addition to the translation and commentary of the Qur'ān Shāh Waliullah also wrote a brochure on the principles of translating the Qur'ān. This work which is small in volume, is very scholarly and thought-provoking The pamphlet starts with the words: "Says this mendicant Waliullah b. 'Abdur Rahīm craving for grace of Merciful God, that this brochure deals with the principles of translation of the Glorious Qur'ān. Its name is Introduction to Principles of Translation and it was written while initiating the translation of the Qur ān."[25]

It seems that the hurdle blocking the way to the translation and propagation of Quranic teachings was removed owing to the step taken by a luminary like Shāh Waliullah (whose encyclopaedia knowledge, sincerity of purpose and perfection of spirit had been unanimously recognised by almost all the scholars of his time). It has happened more than once in the history of Islam that the pioneering action taken by a master spirit of his age has cleared the misplaced apprehensions and doubts and opened the way to the badly needed rejuvenation of the faith. A few glaring examples of it are furnished by Imām Abul Hasan al-Ash'ari's theological discussions employing rational arguments and Imām Gazzali's study and criticism of philosophy.

Subsequent Urdu Translations

The need for an Urdu translation of the Qur'ān began to be felt not long after the Persian translation of Shāh Waliullah.

Urdu had started replacing Persian by the end of the twelfth century and, in fact, some writings in it had appeared by that time.[26] This need of the changing times was first visualized by Shāh Waliullah's son Shāh 'Abdul Qādir (d. 1230/1815). After fifty years of the Persian translation by Shāh Waliullah, Shāh 'Abdur Qādir rendered the Quran into Urdu. This work completed in 1204-5/1790-91 is so idiomatic and graceful that it can safely be claimed that in no other language a translation of the Qur'an exists which has been so successful in employing a form of expression capturing the substance and spirit of the holy scripture. As a prologue to his Urdu rendering of the Qur'ān, Shāh 'Abdul Qādir says: "This feeble slave 'Abdul Qādir thought of making a similar attempt as my respected father Shāh Waliullah son of 'Abdur Rahīm, a native of India and learned in *hadith*, had made by interpreting the Qur'ān in simple Persian. Praise be to Allah that this wish was attained in 1205/1791."[27]

Shāh Raf'i-ud-din (d. 1233/1818), the elder brother of Shāh 'Abdul Qādir attempted another literal translation of the Qur'ān. The erudition and sincerity as well as the judicious carefulness of the author in selection of each word made his translation very popular. Literary circles recognised the merit of both these works, preferring one or the other owing to the distinctive features of each translation.

Both these Urdu renderings gained acceptance among Indian Muslims as standard translations and are normally read by them during recitation of the Qur'ān. In the rectification of creed and propagation of the belief in Divine Unity both have helped innumerable Muslims, perhaps running into several millions. This has been the greatest accomplishment of the three works—by Shāh Waliullah and his two sons—which could have hardly been achieved by any Islamic State with its vast financial resources. All of them were, in truth, the parts of the same heavenly arbour.

Thereafter such a large number of Urdu translations of the Qur'ān came to be made that their enumeration would require a research on the topic.[28]

Quranic Schooling

Apart from the two Urdu translations by the sons of Shāh Waliullah which became common in every Urdu-knowing household of India, the most earnest and prolonged effort to reform the faith and morals of the Muslims through imparting instruction in the Qur'ān was made by Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz (d. 1239/1824), a member of the same family, who virtually brought to completion the work initiated by Shāh Waliullah. He continued to provide coaching in the Qur'ān for about 62 years in Delhi, the metropolis of India, at a time so trying as the thirteenth century hijrah. The popularity his lectures gained and the immensely important task of rectifying Islamic creed of the wayward masses achieved through his instruction can hardly be assessed by anybody.

Al-Fauz-al-Kabīr

A unique work in Islamic literature, as *Al-Fauz-al-Kabīr* is, it has succeeded in edifying the scholars about the correct approach to understand the meanings and message of the Qur'ān as well as in awakening the impulse to work for reform and revival among the Muslims.

The works available on the principles of exegesis are generally sketchy, not going beyond a few obvious rules and propositions or a description of the methodology adopted by an exegete in his interpretation of the Quranic verses. Although Shāh Waliullah's *Al-Fauz-al-Kabīr* is of a modest size, it deals with fundamental rules and criteria on the subject. The difficulties felt in the task and the solutions proposed by the great scholar can be fully appreciated only by those who have an experience of this delicate and baffling task. The book contains clues and dictums, based on personal experiences and inspirations of the Shāh, which will not be found even by going through hundreds of pages written by others. He is exceptionally factual in stating the reason for compilation of this work in its preface:

> "This beggar Waliullah b. 'Abdur Rahīm (with whom Allah may deal graciously) states that when Allah

> opened the door of discernment of the Qur'ān for this mendicant, he had an impulse to scribe some of the useful hints (helpful to people in comprehension of the Qur'ān) in a slim volume. It is hoped that with the grace of Allah students would find in it a way so clear for grasping the meanings of the Qur'ān as may not be available to them even after spending a life-time in the study of commentaries and writings of exegetes (of which a few are nowadays to be found).[29]

A concise description of matters like the topics dealt with in the Qur'ān and their purpose, the form and style of the scripture, the characteristics that distinguish it from all other human writings and the relevance of the occasions leading to revelation of particular verses may not appear to be uncommon today—though there may still be people who may be unfamiliar with them—but these were certainly singular and innovative in the twelfth century hijrah. Undue importance then given to the occasion of revelation of each verse and the lengthy description of such events and occurrances had become a common design of the medieval commentaries with the result that a veil had been thrown over the lesson to be drawn from the Quranic description of certain events and their application to issues in different times and circumstances. Shāh Waliullah criticized this trend which helped to uncover the message of the Qur'ān meant for all times and climes. In the first chapter of the *Al-Fauz-al-Kabir* Shāh Waliullah writes:

> "The commentators of the Qur'ān have generally dove-tailed every verse whether relating to a discourse or a legal ruling with a story shedding light on the event leading to revelation of that passage. But the truth is that the ultimate objective of Quranic revelations is disciplining of human disposition and rectification of man's errant beliefs and morals. For the theologians have presumed the existence of erratic beliefs for the revelation of verses dealing with articles

> of faith, loose morals and offensive ways for the revelation of legal commandments, and the depiction of death and after-life for revelation of the verses of admonition and warning. Thus all those particular events and occurrances are not necessarily relevant to every Quranic verse save in the case of a few which allude to any incident either during the time of the Prophet or before him.' [30]

The key to the comprehension of the Qur'ān lies in a correct understanding of the aberrant beliefs of the people censured by the Qur'ān, their historical background and the reasons for their weaknesses and delusions and the competence to identify those traits in the misguided Muslim sects. Shāh Waliullah has succeeded in delineating all these matters, albeit briefly, but in a way that one cannot hope to find even in voluminous commentaries of the Qur'ān.

In his discussion on the abrogation of certain verses, Shāh Waliullah has made valuable additions by clarifying the terminological differences between the ancient and medieval scholars harmonising the abrogating and the abrogated verses and reconciling the differences between the interpretations of the Prophet's companions and their successors.

Shāh Waliullah's elucidation of the apparent violation of accepted rules of syntax by certain Quranic verses can be appreciated by those only who are aware of the history of the compilation of rules of grammar as well as the differences between the linguistic schools of Basra and Kufa. In short a distinctive feature of this slim volume is that it highlights the fallacies and waywardness of earlier religious communities and sects. This helps us to compare their weaknesses and belmishes with the errant ways adopted by the Muslim society in subsequent times and climes. It thus enables one to diagnose their maladies and find necessary remedial measures in the light of the Quranic revelations. The Qurān has indeed, alluded to it.

> "Now we have revealed unto you a Scripture wherein is your Reminder. Have ye then no sense ?" [31]

Scrutiny of the Doctrine of Tauhīd

Shāh Waliullah did not limit himself to the teaching of the Qur'ān or its rendering into Persian for propagation of the accepted creed in the Oneness of God. He also undertook an scholarly analysis of the concept to show that monotheism was a distinguishing feature and the end of prophetic call given by the great patriarch, Prophet Ibrāhim, which culminated in the mission of the last Prophet Muhammad. The entire Qur'ān, the collections of *hadīth* and life of the Prophet bear witness to this fact. The Prophet elucidated the reality of *tauhīd* and drew such a clear dividing line between absolute monotheism and polytheism, through his toils and exertions against the tiniest trace of polytheism, that nothing more to shield his followers against the corruption of their creed was conceivable.[32] All these are well-known facts requiring no illustration or argument to prove them. Anyone familiar with the Qur'ān and the *hadīth* will find no difficulty in accepting these facts.

How it was, then, that after the conclusion of the age of virtuous generations polytheistic beliefs and practices gained an entrance into the Muslim society? How some of the educated persons dared condone all these deviations and even tried to vindicate them? How these educated Muslims were taken in at all?

Failure to understand the reality of *tauhīd*, the one ess of God, and absence of a clear concept about God being the Creator and Sustainer of the universe among the pagan Arabs were, according to Shāh Waliullah, the reasons for this aberration. A great majority of the people mistook *shirk* or polytheism as taking some one (living or lifeless) as a partner or to equate it with God. They meant by it assignment of such divine attributes and functions as raised some one, in one way or the other, to the level of Supreme Creator. Provider or Destroyer. They thought that vesting of certain subordinate divine functions to a godly soul by way of helping God in the governance of the world or his being empowered by God to perform certain specified tasks did not amount to *shirk* or denial of *tauhīd*. Similarly,

reverential regard for anyone because of one's propinquity to God, even if it were similar to acts falling within the ambit of divine service, was not taken as *shirk* by them; these were, in their view simply means to attain the pleasure of God for He could not be approached directly by the humble and the lowly without any intermediary. The Arab pagans did in fact say :

> "We serve them only that they may bring us nearer to God."[33]

This was a fallacy or rather an illusion which had led large numbers among the Muslims to the prohibited territory of *shirk*. They had crossed the line of demarcation separating monotheism and polytheism. In order to fully comprehend the reasons for it an examination of the creeds and belief of the polytheists in the Age of Ignorance would be essential. What were their concepts about the Being and Attributes of God and whether they held God as the Creator of universe and its Absolute Ruler are the matters to be explored. And, if the replies to these questions are in affirmative then why did the Prophet took them as polytheists and why did the Qur'ān proclaim them as practising *shirk* ?

Shāh Waliullah discussed these issues in the *Al-Fauz-al-Kabīr fi Usūl-al-Tafsīr*. He says :

> "It is *shirk* to credit anyone with an attribute exclusive to God as, for example, assigning anyone God's Will alluded to in the Qur'ān as 'Be, and it becomes'; or considering one to possess inherent knowledge unattainable through one's senses, intellect, dream or intuition; or believing anyone to have the power to cure the sick; or maintaining that reduction in circumstances, illness or difficulty depends on the curse or displeasure of any one; or conversely acquiring affluence, health and happiness to be the outcome of anyone's blessings.
>
> "The polytheists, too, never associated anyone with God in the creation of planets or performance of similar

exalted tasks. They believed that when God contemplates doing anything nobody has the power to stall Him. Their polytheism related to matters connected with the functions of certain individuals. They presumed that the way emperors appointed viceroys from amongst their courtiers and councellors to administer different parts of their realm, empowered them to decide cases according to their own light in the absence of specific royal directions, left the conduct of affairs to them and acted on their recommendations in regard to their subordinates, God also endued His elects with some of the divine functions. In their view the pleasure or displeasure of such angelic souls being efficacious for others, it was necessary to gain accessibility to them so as to win acceptability in the divine presence and have the benefit of the intercession of godly souls at the time of final Reckoning. These illusions led them to legitimatize prostration, offering of sacrifices, taking of oath and seeking the help of these saintly persons. Then they took to carving of their stone, copper and zink images in order to meditate on and propitiate their souls but gradually the ignormuses came to hold those stones as the deity. Thus ensued the great departure from monotheism."[34]

Shāh Waliullah further elucidates the point in his *Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha.*

"The reality of *shirk* consists of entertaining a belief, about any one held in esteem, that his marvellous deeds or miracles worked by him are the result of his being endowed with one of those sublime faculties which are not possessed by ordinary human beings, but are exclusive to the Almighty God. This can be possible only if God confers divinity on one of His creatures, or he attains extinction in the Being of God, or else there is any similar reason assumed by a credulous person. The words of *talbia*, uttered by

> the pagans while performing *haj*, which have been preserved in the *hadith* literature, illustrate the creed held by them before embracing Islam. They used to chant: 'Here I am at Thy service; O Lord! Here I am at Thy service; There is no partner unto Thee save the one elected by Thee; Thou art his Lord and of all that he possesses' This examplifies why a devotee abases himself and glorifies the person whom he deems as sharing divinity and adores him in the way human beings should serve Almighty God.' [35]

Shāh Waliullah has mentioned at another place in the *Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha* that pagans of pre-Islamic Arabia agreed with the Muslims on certain aspects of the Divine Being. They never denied the existence of God and His uniqueness and omnipotence. They simply considered those whom they deemed as elects and favourites of God to have been assigned with a share in certain Divine attributes and functions, and hence exalted them in the way they glorified the Almighty.

In the section dealing with *tauhid* the Shāh writes in the *Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha*:

> "Polytheists accepted, like Muslims, that in the performance of great tasks, resolved or intended, by God Almighty, no option was left with anybody. But in other matters they took a view divergent from the Muslims in as much as they held that the pious souls of olden times had, by virtue of their intensive devotions, been granted divinity by God. This made them eligible to divine honours which ought to be paid to them by other creations, much in the same way as a slave becomes qualified to hear and accept the petitions of the people over whom he is appointed as a governor by a king. They believed that benedictions to the Lord received divine acceptance only when these were accompanied by invocatious to such pious souls, for, in truth and reality, God is so Lofty, so High and Mighty that the prayers addressed directly to

Him do not find admittance before Him. It was, therefore, essential that these holy persons should be adored so that they may pass on the petitions of their devotees to God. They imagined that the elects of God saw and listened the devotions addressed to them, interceded on behalf of their devotees, managed their affairs and helped them in difficulties. The chiselled stones were meant to keep their memory fresh and hence they meditated on them. Those who came after them did not differentiate between the idols and the persons whom they took as the elects of God, and adored the idols as their deities "[36]

At another place the Shāh writes:

"The pagans of Arabia were convinced that no created being was an associate of God in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the frames and substances in between the two. Similarly, they agreed, none shared any power with God in the accomplishment of extraordinary tasks, nor anybody had the power to delay or stall the decision once taken by God. God says in the Qur'ān, 'If thou shouldest ask them: Who created the heavens and the earth? they would answer: Allah."[37]

"The Qur'ān itself testifies that the pagans placed reliance on God and also beseeched Him. "Nay, but unto Him ye call.....and yet forget whatever partner ye ascribe unto Him."[38]

"And again: ".....all unto whom ye cry fail save Him."[39]

"Deviation and disbelief of the pagans of Arabia was, in reality, because of their conviction that there were certain angels and pious souls which managed everyday affairs of their devotees and solved the personal problems relating to their children and possessions, barring, of course, tasks of higher category. They imagined that the relationship between God and these

guardian souls was comparable to that of a pampered slave with his master or of the courtiers and councellors with a despotic emperor. According to divine dispensation certain functions were deemed to have been entrusted by God to one angel or the other, or God answered the entreaties of certain pious souls. But these ignormuses had drawn an inference that those angels or saints were fully competent to do anything they desired, just like the king himself. This amounted to assuming something non-existent as existent, and that was really the root cause of their going astray."[40]

Similarly, Shāh Waliullah analysed and identified the causes responsible for polytheistic beliefs of the commonality and those of the educated class which represented it. He unmasked their fallacies which had led the illiterates, and some even among the educated, to swallow such credulous beliefs as offering of prayers and oblations to beings other than God, keeping fast to propitiate the saints, imploring godly souls of the old for seeking their help, treating their shrines and everything connected therewith as venerable like the two sacred Mosques, deeming them entitled to make minor changes in the divine dispensation and authorised to dole out hardship and ease, illness and health, adversity and prosperity. These persons depending on polytheistic dogmas disregard the divine command to 'worship Allah, making religion pure for Him only.'[41] They miss the merits of sincerity in faith, reliance on Allah and devotion to Him. Their notions and persuations remind one of the Quranic dictum: "And most of them believe not in Allah except that they attribute partners (unto Him)"[42]

Had Shāh Waliullah and his successors not directed their efforts to anything save what they did to examine, elucidate and propagate the accurate precept in regard to Oneness of God, and to expose the fallacies of the misguided masses, he would have perfectly been entitled to be treated as the renovator of his age. He has, however, many more accomplishments to his

credit which would be discussed in the succeeding sections.

Exact Discernment of Islamic Creed

Apart from this fundamental reformative work performed by Shāh Waliullah, which was indeed essential for the guidance of the Muslim society on the right path—a condition indispensable for becoming entitled to divine succour and grace—it was also an achievement that he undertook an intellectual appraisal of the Islamic creed, elucidated it in the light of the Qur'ān and *sunnah* and invited the people to adopt the practice of the companions and their successors. He also acted on his precepts and presented a model to be emulated by others. The world of Islam then needed a leading light whose soundness of faith was unimpeachable and who could confute and contradict the subtle quibblings of the philosophers about religious truths. Such a man had to possess an unflinching faith in Quranic revelations in regard to the Being and Attributes of God and other spiritual realities and, at the same time, was gifted to elucidate them in the language of the logicians and philosophers. The Prophet of Islam is related to have declared that such rightguided scholars will be "those who would protect the religion from exaggerations of the credulous, innovations of the undevout and misinterpretations of the ignorants."[43]

There has never been a time when Islam had no such academicians to serve its cause. There had lately been Shaikhul Islām Hāfiz Ibn Taimiyah Harrāni (d. 728/1328) during the eighth century of Hijrah and, after him, his illustrious disciple Ibn Qayyim Jauziyah (d. 791/1389) who wrote the *Zād-al-Ma'ād* and a few other prominent scholars.

Shāh Waliullah can be cited with full confidence as next only to Imām Ibn Taimiyah. His intellectual endeavours have already earned the recognition of scholars. He was fully competent to spell out the Islamic creed as comprehended by the earliest Muslims in a language that could be grasped by his contemporary scholastics. He had delved deep into the Greek philosophy and theological dialectics. He was, at the same time, an authority

on the Qur'ān and *hadīth* with an exceptional insight into the *shari'ah*. If he was an expert in elucidation of religious truths, he also knew how to be simple, plain and accurate in his expression. His *Al- Aqīdata al-Hasanah*[44] is a model of deep and abstruse thoughts expressed in a simple and easy style. The work deals with the branch of Islamic learning known as *Ilm-i-Tauhīd* (or the science normally forming part of theological dialectics) and covers all the tenets of faith deemed essential by the Ahl-i-Sunnat school and of which every educated Muslim has necessarily to be conversant.

In one of his short works written under the tittle of *Wasāyā*[45] (The Will) Shāh Waliullah writes:

> "My foremost wish is that both in creed and deeds one should always be firm on the scripture and the *sunnah*. In regard to tenets of faith, the doctrines held by the earliest Muslims should be preferred and in case they have left anything (of the Divine Attributes or allegorical verses) unexplored, one should better refrain from attempting to elucidate them. The dubious ratiocinations of the logicians need not be given any heed."

The approach and outlook of Shāh Waliullah in regard to Divine Names and Attributes is made clear from the following extract taken from the *Hujjat-Allāh-al-Bāligha*.

> "God is beyond and superior enough to be discerned by intellect or senses. His attributes are not so embeded in His Being as properties are found in the matter, nor are these of the type that can be comprehended by reason and expressed in words familiar to us. Nonetheless, it is also essential that people should know all these things so that humanity is enabled to attain as much perfection as is possible for it. This being the case, there is no alternative but to express Divine Attributes with the use of words that indicate their collaterals and consequences, as, for instence, we evince 'mercy' for God, but it means an outflow of

> grace and compassion and not the feeling of kindness (although this inclination really means mercy) felt in one's heart. Similarly, in order to convey the omnipotence of God we are bound to make use of the words denoting power and authority of man. This is because we do not have words better than these to articulate the purport. In this way a lot of words would be employed allegorically but with the reservation that they are not meant to convey their literal sense—the drift being to express the concepts suitable to the Exalted Being of God.....All the revealed religions are agreed that the words used so far to convey the Divine Attributes shall continue to be employed without making any further research into the precise sense of such words. This was the prevailing view of the times spoken of as the best of all ages (that is, upto the time of the successors of the companions). Later on people came up among the Muslims who started giving thought to the matter without regard to the textual authority or adequate justification for their effort."[46]

The entire world of Islam, particularly those countries which had succumbed to intellectual and cultural influence of Iran had, for the past several hundred years, yielded virtually to a sort of mental serfdom to Greek philosophy. Their hairsplittings and ratiocinations had invented explanations for Divine Attributes which had rendered them meaningless. They had nothing but contempt for the scholars of old; those who were moderate used to remark with an air of judicious reserve: 'The scholars of old were discreet but the moderns are scientific in their quest.' Shāh Waliullah's attitude about Divine Attributes in this overview of his time was exceptionally daring as well as calculated to reform the ill-conceived notions prevalent among the Muslims.

Shāh Waliullah's own bent of mind approving the older school of thought in regard to Divine Names and Attributes, his disinclination towards he views of philosophers and theological

scholastics whose hair-splittings very often divested the Divine Being of all power and authority, and the great regard he had for the *hadīth* and *sunnah* of the holy Prophet led him to recognise the greatness of Ibn Taimiyah and defend him against his detractors. Ibn Taimiyah had, in the immediate past, been severely censured, but Shāh Waliullah paid glowing tribute to him in the *Tafhimāt-i-Ilāhiyah*.

> "Nothing in the writings of Ibn Taimiyah is unsupported by textual authority from the scripture and the *sunnah* or the practice of the earliest Muslims. He was an scholar of exceptional abilities. Is there anybody who can be compared with him either in speech or writing? Those who have decried him do not possess even one-tenth of Ibn Taimiyah's talents."[47]

Notes and References

1. *A Guidebook for Muslims*, Lucknow, 1985, p. 32. The view expressed here is illustrated in the work with Quranic verses and events in the life of the holy Prophet.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.
3. Q. 3 : 139.
4. Q. 24 : 55.
5. S. Abul Hasan 'Ali Nadwi, *Islamic Concept of Prophethood*, Lucknow, 1979, p. 52.
6. S. Abul Hasan 'Ali Nadwi, *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, Vol. II (Lucknow 1974). p. 73.
7. *Saviours of Islamic Spirit* Vol. II, op-cit., pp. 74, 76, 80.
8. *Maktūbāt-i-Imām Rabbāni*, Vol. III, letter No. 41.
9. Q. 2 : 80.
10. *At-Tafhimāt-i-Ilāhiya*, Vol. II, pp. 134-35.
11. *Al-Fauz al-Kabīr*, pp. 8-9.
12. Shāh 'Abdul Qādir, *Mūzeh al-Qur'ān*, Introduction.
13. The author of the *Hayāt-i-Wali* says on the basis of what he heard from one of his contemporaries that the Shāh had undertaken the journey to Hijaz since his translation of the Qur'ān into Persian had caused a tumult against him among the ignorant people. He also narrates a story of murderous attack on the Shāh (pp. 418-423). However, the story is not substantiated from any other source.

Introduction to the *Fath-ur-Rahmān* specifies that Shāh Waliullah initiated the work on 10th Dhil Hijja 1150 A. H. (13th March, 1738) and concluded it in 1151/1739. This means that the Shāh took up the translation four or five years after he returned from Hijaz. I have a two volume handwritten copy of the *Fath-ur-Rahmān* in my private library. It was personally presented by the Shah to Muhammad 'Āzam 'Uthmāni Nasirabadi, one of our forbears devoted to the Shāh. Muhammad 'Āzam was brought up by Syed Muhammad N'omān, the uncle of Syed Ahmad Shahid. This manuscript was inherited by Syed Qutb-ul-Huda who was a disciple of Shah Abdul 'Aziz, and then it found its way to the private library of my father Hakim Syed 'Abdul Hai. It was copied in 1165/ 755, that is, eleven years before the Shah breathed his last. Before the Shah left for Hijaz he had translated only parts of *Sūratul Baqarah* and *Sūratun Nisa.*

14. This brochure has been published as one of Shāh Waliullah's works although we do not find it mentioned in other works or biographies of Shāh Waliullah. May be that it was omitted since it was a small brochure, but its style and the thought contained in it represents the Shāh's views on the subject.
15. Q. 62 : 2.
16. Q. 62 : 3
17. Q. 54 : 22
18. Q. 47 : 24
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Tuhfah-al-Muwahhidīn*, Al-Maktaba Salfiah, Lahore, pp. 5-7.
21. Q. 7 : 45
22. *'Ja'iza Tarājim-i-Qur'āni*, Deoband, pp. 13-14.
23. 'Abdul Haq Haqqāni, *Al-Bayān fi-Uloom-al-Qur'ān*, Introduction, pp. 507.
24. Shāh Waliullah, Introduction to *Fathur Rahmān*, Delhi, 1294 A. H.
25. Appendage of *Fath-ur-Rahmān*, MSS Nadwatul Ulama.
26. Ahsan Mārehrivi, *Tarikh Nasr-i-Urdu*, pp. 74-77.
27. 'Abdul Qādir, *Mūzeh-al-Qur'ān*, Vol. I, p. 2.
28. The World Bibliography of the Translations of the Meanings of the Holy Quran (Istanbul, 1986) lists 159 complete and 309 incomplete Urdu translations of the Qur'ān. According to this work Shāh 'Abdul Qādir's translation has seen 22 reprints and that of Shah Raf'i-Ud-din was printed 28 times by 1980.

29. *Al-Fauz-al-Kabīr.*

30. *Al-Fauz-al-Kabir*, p. 3-4.

31. Q. 21 : 10.

32. The Prophet's directives in regard to assemblage on graves, celebrations over them, reverential prostration, disallowing the taking of oaths in the name of anyone save God, etc., are some of the examples. The Prophet even showed displeasure when a Bedouin remarked, "As Allah and you wish". He remonstrated with the Bedouin, saying, "You have equated me with God. No, say : What God Wills."

33. Q. 39 : 3.

34. *Al-Fauz al-Kabir*, pp. 7-8.

35. *Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha*, Vol. I, p. 61.

36. *Ibid* , p. 59.

37. Q. 31 : 25

38. Q. 6 : 41

39. Q. 17 : 67

40. *Hujjat Allah al-Bāligha*, Vol I, p. 125.

41. Q. 39 : 2

42. Q. 12 : 106

43. *Baihaqi.*

44. This work was first published by Matb'a Mufid-i-'Ām, Agra. Later on late Muhammad Owais Nadwi, then Prof. of Tafsīr in Nadwatul Ulama added commentaries to the original, mostly from other writings of Shāh Waliullah, which was published under the title in *Al-Aqīdata al-Sunniyah* 1382/1962 from Lucknow. The first volume of *Tafhimāt-i- Ilāhiyah* contains the entire *Al-'Aqidata al-Hasanah* and hence it seems that the latter was extracted from the former for being brought out separately in the form of a brochure. Those interested can see the author's *A Guidebook for Muslims* which gives a summary of this work.

45. The collection of Shāh Waliullah's Persian articles entitled *Al-Mirāt al-Wadhīyata al-Nasīhata wa al-Wasiyata* contains this tract also.

46. *Hujjatallah-al-Bāligha*, Vol. I, p. 63.

47. *Jala'al-'Ainain*, p. 64 (cited from *Tafhimāt-i-Ilāhiya*).

VI

Propagation of Hadith and Co-ordination of Hadith & Fiqh

Significance of Hadith

Shāh Waliullah's endeavour to propagate *hadith* through revival of its teaching and writing monumental works on the subject, set afoot the process of Islamic revival in the Indian sub-Continent or rather in the whole Islamic world during the present era (which begins by the middle of the twelfth century of hijrah and continues to the present day). It was such a great achievement that overshadowed all of his literary and intellectual attainments, and he came to be known as the *Muhaddith Dehlavi* (The Traditionist of Delhi) which really became an adjunct to his name.

But, before the story of Shāh Waliullah's great achievement in this field is recounted, it would be worthwhile to understand the role *hadith* has played in maintaining the correct Islamic attitude and spirit, why its teaching and preaching is necessary for the Muslims in every time and clime and what disastrous results can follow if indifference is shown to it. The writer of these lines would like to present a few selections from one of his writings penned on this topic.[1]

Hadith: The Touchstone of Perfection

"The sayings and practices of the holy Prophet constitute a

standard, an exact scale by which the later reformers and revivalists of faith can measure the doctrines and disciplines and the norms and usages of public life of their own times, and can find out the errors and deviations made by the community during its long journey through time and space. Likewise, it is essential for the right and proper functioning of public morality and virtuous behaviour of the individuals that both the Qur'ān and the *ahādith* should be kept in view to draw out the rules of conduct. Had there been no record of the Prophet's instructions and his public and private conduct, exerting a steadying and moderating influence, the followers of Islam would have, like the adherents of other religions, gone to the extremes in their beliefs and observances and strayed from the middle and narrow path. Thus, a living personality, rather than an abstract maxim is held up as an ideal to set the pace of life in Islam. The Qur'ān tells the Muslims: *Assuredly in the Apostle of Allah you have an excellent pattern*,[2] and urges them to take his life as a model in every little detail with the soul-stirring words: *Say, If you love Allah, follow me: Allah will love you, forgive you your sins.*[3] The holy Prophet of Islam is, in truth and reality, the great exemplar needed by mankind for gaining strength and confidence in betaking the path of virtue and goodness.

"The actions and sayings of the Prophet are life-giving, effective and weighty which have always helped the people to exercise self-criticism and urged them to fight against iniquity and evil, deviations and innovations in the religious norms and usages of the private and public life. They have given birth to virtuous persons in every age and country who have taken upon themselves the task of reform and revivalism, relentlessly fought superstitious beliefs and erroneous doctrines and invited the people back to the Islamic way of life. The *ahādith* of the Prophet have, for that reason, always remained the sheet-anchor of every Muslim community: their diligent preservation, propagation and study is a requisite for the continuity of social, cultural, intellectual, moral and spiritual standards of Islamic way of life.

Evidence Furnished by History

"The truth of the matter is that the *sunnah* of the Prophet preserved in numerous collections of *ahādith*, has always been the fountain of genuine Islamic thought as well as the passionate desire to reform and renovate the Muslim society. It is the *hadith* from which the reformers born from time to time were able to get an accurate knowledge of Islamic faith and thought; from it they acquired their thesis and arguments and on it they have always relied upon for the defence of their stand. It has also been the inspirational force behind their fervid enthusiasm to invite the people back to the true faith and to fight every unsound norm and usage. And so it shall remain to the end of time for any one desiring to take up a reformatory undertaking in order to forge a link between the lives of the people in his day and the perfect example of the holy Prophet. He shall have to take recourse to *hadith* if he wants to cater for the changing needs of society in accordance with the principles of faith and morality as enunciated by Islam.

"History of Muslim societies in different parts of the world bears witness to the fact that whenever the Muslims have neglected the study of *hadith* for a considerable length of time, new aberrations and innovations, extraneous doctrines and usages and foreign influences have found their way into the lives of the Muslims notwithstanding the existence of spiritual guides and religious teachers, on the one hand, and powerful and affluent Muslim kingdoms, on the other. These alien thoughts and practices have very often threatened to transform and distort the Muslim society on the pattern of un-Islamic community of the pagan past, as if fulfilling the foreboding of the holy Prophet that 'you would follow in the footsteps of the bygone nations.'[4] These have been the times when the lamp of reform and renovation seemed to be flickering.

"Take for instance the religious and social condition of the Indian Muslims during the tenth century of Islamic era when religious and intellectual circles in that sub-continent had almost severed their connections with the *hadith* and its authentic

sources. They had, during the period, no contact with the centres of religious learning in Hijaz, Yemen, Egypt and Syria where the study of *hadīth* was still pursued. Educational institutions in India were then vigorously cultivating *fiqh* (law), *usūl* (jurisprudence), logic and philosophy but unsound usages had gained popularity, heterodoxy was a common spectacle and numerous unorthodox forms of seeking communion with God had been invented. In the third volume of the *Saviours of Islamic Spirit* I have taken stock of the teachings of Indian mystics and written about the *Jawāhar i-Khamsa* of an eminent and popular Sufi Shaikh Muhammad Ghauth of Gwalior.

".....The orientation of life in all its aspects as dictated by the authentic sayings and practices of the Prophet, attempted by these scholars ('Ali Muttaqi of Burhānpūr and Muhammad Tāhir of Patan) in Gujarat, was unknown to other parts of the country; nor did the people knew anything about the *Sihāh Sittah*[5] or about the scholars who had devoted their lives to the study of *hadīth* and rebuttal of unsound norms and usages. The *Jawāhar-i-Khamsa* by a celebrated Shattari mystic, Shaikh Muhammad Ghauth of Gwalior, offers the best example of the then *sūfi* thought which was permeated with the indigenous theosophic doctrines and practices. The articulate structure of sufistic precepts and cults propounded in this book are based entirely on the supposed utterances of the earlier mystics or the personal experiences of the author, who, it seems, did not consider it necessary to deduce these precepts from any authentic collection of *hadīth* or any book dealing with the Prophet's life and character. Being a collection of orisons for special occasions and for specific purposes, it includes supplications for offering *namāz-i ahzāb* (prayer of confederates), *salāt-al 'āshiqīn* (prayer of the lovers), *namāz-i-tanwīr-ul-qabr* (prayer for grave's illumination) and a number of other devotions and supplications meant for different months of the year that cannot be traced to any saying or doing of the Prophet of Islam,"[6]

"The *Jawāhar-i-Khamsa* is not the solitary example of this kind. In numerous biographical accounts of saints, hagiogra-

phies and collections of their tabletalks one can find similar unauthorised practices commended by them. Of the times we are talking about such practices as complimentary prostration before the mystic Shaikhs and their graves, lighting of candles at sepulchrul monuments, laying of wreaths on the graves of saints and showing the same reverential regard to them as to the holy mosque of Mecca, celebrations like musical concerts, keeping of fasts and offering sacrifices to propitiate the saints, holding of fairs to commemorate their birth and death anniversaries were a common sight – in most of these ceremonies the saints were so exalted as if they were co-sharers of God in governance of the world."[7]

".....Had these numerous compilations of *hadith*, giving an insight into the difference between the sound and unsound creeds and usages, not been available to the scholars, the successive chain of reformers and revivalists from Shaikh-ul-Islām Ibn Taimiyah (d. 728/1328) to Hakīm-ul-Islām Shāh Waliu'llah (d. 1176/1762) would never have come forth."[8]

"If one goes through the biographies and the writings of the tenth and eleventh century scholars of Afghanistan, one would find that little attention was paid by the then scholars to the commendation of the *sunnah* and repudiation of unorthodox precepts and practices, nor was any effort made by them to analyse and investigate these issues. Then, Mulla 'Ali Qāri b. Sultān Muhammad (d. 1014/1605) suddenly appeared on the scene who went to Hijaz for the study of the *hadith* under some reputed scholars. He returned after drinking deep in that branch of learning and then he took up the task of expounding matters relating to *hadith* and *fiqh*, put up a front against the unsound practices that were commonly in vogue and endeavoured to reform the society of its ills. His probity and courage led him to defend Shaikh-ul-Islām Ibn Taimiyah and to boldly affirm that the Shaikh-ul-Islām was a savant with a pious soul who should be reckoned among the saints of Islam "[9]

Almost the same type of development took place in several Arab countries like Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Tunis, Algeria and

Moracco where study of *hadīth* prepared the ground for reform and rejuvenation of the Muslim Society.

Science of Hadith and the Arabs

History of Islam bears out the fact that the science of *hadīth* flourished only in those countries where Islam was taken by the Arabs. It was because of the attachment of the Arabs to the blessed Prophet, their strong memory and realistic and practical approach in safeguarding the frontiers of faith. They always encouraged its teaching and literary endeavours related to it within their sphere of influence. Yemen, Hadharmaut, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, North Africa and Andalus (Spain) are some of the countries which witnessed this development. Even Gujarat, in India, furnishes a similar example which gave birth to such eminent scholars of *hadīth* as Shaikh 'Ali Muttaqi of Burhānpūr (the author of *Kanz-al-Ummal* d. 975/1568) and Shaikh Muhammad Tāhir of Patan (author of *Majm'a Bahār al-Anwār*). Gujarat, in comparison to the rest of the country, was more in contact with Hijaz and had also the privilege of frequently receiving Arab scholars.

The position was different in the countries which received the message of Islam through non-Arabs. Turks and Afghans established their kingdoms in the main-land of India while mystics and scholars who, too, ethnically belonging to these races had migrated from Iran or Turkistan, preached Islam among the local population. But, when the time came for organising educational activites and drawing up curricula for tuitional purposes, these were unduly influenced by non-Arab scholars, or, to be specific, Iranian philosophers and logicians. In an earlier section we have already described how Iran, which had been the motherland of some of the greatest scholars of *hadīth*, had broken its relationship with this branch of science in consequence of the establishment of Safawid rule and conversion of its people to the Shi'ite faith in the beginning of the tenth century of Hijrah. There was thus no possibility of *hadīth* being studied in Indian educational circles or being given any consi-

deration that might lead to its prominence. Conversely, the more the Iranian intellectual influence was getting stronger in India, the more indifference to *hadīth* was growing among the Indian scholars. In the twelfth century of Hijrah, when Shāh Waliullah arrived on the scene, this development had touched its climax.

Hadīth in India

Hakim Syed 'Ābdul Ha'i has given a condensed account of the rise and fall of *hadīth* studies in his *As Thaqāfat-al Islāmia fi-al-Hind*. The excerpt given here from it covers the development extending to several hundred years.

> "After the Arab domination over Sind came to an end, Ghaznavid and Ghūrid sultans established their hold over that province. There was then an inflow of scholars from Khurasan and Transoxania causing a decline in the study of *hadīth* which gradually became almost extinct. Poetry, astrology and mathematics among intellectual sciences and law and jurisprudence among Islamic branches of learning gained popularity among the people. This situation continued for long and ultimately Greek philosophy became the main pursuit of Indian scholars. Indifference to Quranic exegesis and *hadīth* became common. A little part of these two subjects directly connected with the legal issues came to be deemed sufficient by the academicians. It was customary, in those days, to leaf through *Mashāriq-al-Anwār* of Imām Saghānī, for making the grade as a scholar of *hadīth*. If any one desired to go in for further studies in the subject, he deemed it sufficient to go through Imām Baghawi's *Misābīh-us-Sunnah* or the *Mishkāt*. Any one who had studied these books was taken for a scholar of *hadīth*. This was because the people were ignorant of the worth and merit of the *hadīth*. In fact, the people were generally unfamiliar with the *hadīth* and

they hardly knew anything about its great masters. A few scholars read the *Mishkāt* just out of pious sentiment. They valued the study of law as a matter of convention and not for delving deep into its issues. This gave an occasion to compilations of juristic opinions of the earlier juris-consults with little attention being given to the well-defined commands and injunctions of the Qur'ān. Nobody ever bothered to further examine or reconcile such juristic opinions with the Qur'ān and the *Hadīth.*

"Then a time came when God caused this branch of learning to become a popular subject of study. In the tenth century of Hijrah a number of scholars of *hadīth* came to India. Some of these were :

1. Shaikh 'Abdul Mu'aṭṭi Makki b. Hasan b. 'Abdullah Bākathīr (d. Ahmadabad, 989/1581).
2. Shihāb Ahmad Misri b. Badr-ud-din (d. Ahmadabad, 992/1584).
3. Shaikh Muhammad Fākhi Hanbali b. Ahmad b. 'Ali (d. Ahmadabad, 992/1584).
4. Shaikh Muhammad Māliki Misri b. Muhammad 'Abdur Rahmān (d. Ahmedabad, 919/1513).
5. Shaikh Raf'i-ud-din Chishti Shirāzi (d. Akbarabad, 954/1547).
6. Shaikh Ibrahim Baghdādi b. Ahmad b. Hasan.
7. Shaikh Ziā-ud-din Madni (d Kakori, Lucknow).
8. Shaikh Bahlol Badakhshi, Khwājā Mir Kalān Harwi (d. Akbarabad, 981/1573).

'A few scholars of India also visited Makkah and Medina where they acquired proficiency in *hadīth.* On their return they continued to teach the subject in Gujarat for a long time, but eventually went back to Hijaz. These were: Shaikh Y'aqūb b. Hasan Kashmiri (d. 1003/1595), Shaikh Jauhar Kashmiri (d. 1026/1617), Shaikh 'Abdun Nabi Gangohi b. Ahmad, Shaikh 'Abdullah Sultānpūri b. Shams-ud-din, Shaikh Qutb-

ud-din 'Abbāsi Gujarati, Shaikh Ahmad b. Ismā'il Mandwi, Shaikh Rājeh b. Dāwūd Gujarati, Shaikh 'Alīm-ud-din Māndwi, Shaikh Mo'ammar Ibrāhīm b. Dā'ūd Mānipuri (d. Akbarabad), Shaikh Muhammad b. Tāhir 'Ali Patani author of the *Majm'a Bahār-al-Anwār*, Saiyid 'Abd-ul-Awwal Husaini b. 'Ali b. Al-'Ula al-Husaini and few other scholars."[10]

Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi

Syed Hakim 'Abdul Hai continues at another place in the *As-Thaqāfat al-Islamiyah fi al-Hind.*

"Shaikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi b. Saif-ud-din Bukhāri (d. 1052/1642) was destined by God to diffuse the knowledge of *hadīth* in India. He started his pedagogical activities at Delhi, the metropolies of India, and spared no effort in promoting the study of *hadīth.* A large number of scholars graduated under him and some even penned treatises on the subject. Shaikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi had to strive laboriously in diffusing the knowledge of *hadīth*; Allah caused a great benefit to be derived by the people through his toil and talents. His efforts were so outstanding in comparison to earlier scholars that he came to be regarded as the pioneer in this field in India. However, as already stated earlier, this is not attested by historical evidence.

"After the death of Shaikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi, his son Shaikh Nūr-ul-Haq (d. 1073/1663) took up the unfinished task of his father. This tradition was continued by a few of his successors, as Shaikh-ul-Islam Shāreh Bukhāri, and Salām Ullah b. Shaikh Nār-ul-Haq who wrote *Muhalla* and *Kamālain.*"[11]

Prof. Khalīq Ahmad Nizāmi has correctly observed in the biography of Shaikh 'Abdul Haq :

"Anyhow, by the time Shaikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddith

> Dehlavi started instructing students in *hadith* this branch of learning had almost become extinct in Northern India. He lighted the torch of Islamic learning in darkened surroundings so resplendently that people from far off places felt attracted to him like fire-flies. A new teaching centre of *hadith* came into existence in the northern part of the country, which culminated in transferring the centre of Islamic learning, particularly *hadith*, from Gujarat to Delhi."[12]

Need of a Mujaddid

Shaikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi's sincerity of purpose and godliness diverted attention of the people towards study of *hadith* and created a new atmosphere of teaching and learning and research and writing on the subject which lent the hope that his successors and family members, some of whom were erudite scholars and writers, would give further encouragement to diffusion of the *hadith*. It was expected that *hadith* would be accorded its rightful place in the curricula of educational institution in the country. Mufti Nūr-ul-Haq (d. 1073/1663), the son of Shaikh 'Abdul Haq, was a reputed penman who had written a six-volume commentary on *Sahih Bukhāri* as well as on *Shamāil Tirmidhi* in Persian. He could have very well brought to completion the great task of his father, but, perhaps his engagement as Qazi of the Capital at Akbarabad (Agra) did not allow him to devote adequate time and attention to the tuitional and literary side of the propagation of *hadith*. His son Shaikh-ul-Islam Dehlavi was also a well-known scholar of *hadith* who wrote a detailed commentary on *Sahih Bukhāri*. But whatever may have been the reasons the efforts of the successors of Shaikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi's could not spark off the popular interest in *hadith*, as was expected of them. One of the reasons, perhaps, was their inclination to utilize *hadith* for justification and furtherance of the Hanafite school of jurisprudence. There was another reason also. By the middle of the twelfth century

Delhi was losing its place as the pedagogic centre of the country to Lucknow where Mulla Nizām-ud-din Sihālwi (d. 1161/1748) was giving final shape to a new curriculum. Unfortunately, however, those who were shaping the new educational system had little intellectual contact with Makkah and Medina or those places which were known for the study, teaching and preaching of *hadith*. They were chiefly influenced, as the evolution of *Dars-i-Nizāmi* and the literary and biographical works of its precursors show, by the intellectual sciences. Among the Islamic branches of learning their chief interest lay in jurisprudence.

Thus, India was, at that time, in search of a scholar who was enraptured with the charms of *hadith* to an extent that he was willing to devote himself whole-heartedly to its propagation. India got the man it needed in the person of Shāh Waliullah in the middle of the 12th century of Hijrah (18th century A. D.), who made a motto of his life what a poet has thus expressed :

Whatever I learnt, I have sunk in oblivion,
Save the talk of friend, that is my refrain.

Author of the *As-Thaqāfat-al-Islāmiyah fi-al-Hind* has after giving an account of the services of Traditionists of the eleventh and opening decades of the twelfth century A. H. entered into the endeavours of Shāh Waliullah who not only revived its study in India but created a general awakening among the Muslims. *Hadith* came to be recognised as an essential part of curriculum of the religious schools which led the students to go in for specialisation and higher studies on the subject. *Sihāh Sittah*, particularly the four of it, that is, *Bukhāri*, *Muslim*, *Abū Dāwūd* and *Tirmidhi* began to be studied in depth (which is still not common in the Arab countries) and numerous commentaries on the classical works of *hadith* came to be written in this country.[13] Standard works of *hadith* were rendered into Urdu which proved of great benefit to the Muslim community including women. These works also created a desire among the people to follow the precepts of the holy Prophet. India, in fact, became such a centre of *hadith* studies that the noted Egyptian scholar and editor of *Al-Manār* Syed Rashīd Raza has paid tribute to the Indian

scholars in these words:

> "Had our brother scholars in India not paid attention to the science of *hadīth* in those days, its study would have suffered a complete extinction in the eastern countries. The subject was already being neglected in Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Hijaz since the beginning of the tenth century resulting in its complete decline by the beginning of the fourteenth century."[14]

Shāh Waliullah's estimate about Hadith

What were the impulses and inspirations that spurred the Shāh to study *hadīth* and devote his entire life to its teaching and preaching? We shall have to turn to the Shāh's own writtings to find an answer to this question. His *magnum opus*, the *Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha* opens with the words:

> "The crown of all infallible knowledge and the source and foundation of religious branches of learning is the science of *hadīth* which gives us an account of the sayings and doings of the noble Prophet as well as tells us of his tacit approval of the things done in his presence. The *ahādīth* are like luminous torches in the surrounding darkness, the mile-stones of guidance or like the brilliant moon shedding light in a gloomy night. One who follows them finds guidance and is blessed with merit and those who disregard them are misguided and ruined For the life of the holy Prophet (on whom be peace) is the infinite source of divine commandments and prohibitions, admonitions and glad tidings and instructions and God's remebrance, the *ahādīth* abound in all these matters like the Qur'ān or even to a greater extent."[15]

At another place he writes:

> "The first and foremost thing to which intellect guides any one is that the actions and aphorisms of the Prophet (on whom be peace) should be followed: then comes the stage wherein one should develop a

sincere inclination for them in his heart, for this is incumbent on a man who has put his trust in God and promised to abide by His commandments, and who has also resolved to discharge the responsibilities laid on him."[16]

Neglect of Hadīth Studies in India

Another motivation for Shāh Waliullah to revive the study of *hadīth* was the deviation of Indian Muslims from the true faith and practice. As already stated in the second chapter of this work even the educated people were not averse to innovations in religious matters or following superstitious and un-Islamic rites and customs. All these had gone to make Islam indistinct from polytheistic creeds. In the intellectual and pedagogic circles the Greek sciences were hailed as knowledge and wisdom. artificial and florid style was esteemed and theological dialectics attaching little importance to *hadīth* had overshadowed other religious branches of learning. Even those who were inclined to attain proficiency in religious sciences never went beyond the law and jurisprudence. These were the conditions which made the Shāh bewail in one of his writings:

"I ask you who regard yourselves as scholars! O' servants of God, you have entangled yourselves in the net of Greek sciences, grammar and syntax and etymology, and deem these to be the end of knowledge. But knowledge is to be found either in the explicit verses of the Book of God or the proven practice of the Prophet (on whom be peace). You ought to have known how the Prophet (on whom be peace) used to offer prayers, how he performed ablution, how he went to ease himself, how he kept fasts, how he performed the pilgrimage, how he went out to battle-field, how he conversed with others, how he kept everything in memory and how excellent was his character and behaviour. You had to follow his practice--not because it was obligatory on you—but

that it was the *sunnah*, the practice of the Prophet (on whom be peace). You ought to have learnt the injunctions prescribed by religion and created a longing in you for success in the life to come through your study of the biographies of the Prophet's companions and their successors. All these would have made you perfect in spirit. But your engagements and studies are all related to things that may be helpful in this life but not in the life to come.

"You leaf through the rulings of the earlier jurists and the commentaries compiled on them but are oblivious of the fact that the word of command is the behest of God and His Messenger. Many amongst you are told about a certain *hadīth*, but instead of accepting and acting on it, you take the plea that you are bound to follow your own school of jurisprudence rather than that what the blessed Prophet (on whom be peace) did or said. You seem to think that the responsibility of understanding and interpreting the *ahādīth* rested only on those who were experts and perfect in knowledge, and since they did not act on a certain *hadīth*, there must have been some reason for it—it must have been abrogated or superseded by another *hadīth*.

"Lo! this is not religion. If you have given faith to your Prophet, than follow him implicitly, irrespective of what your jurists say about it. God wanted you to follow the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*. If it is possible for you to do so, well and good; but if you lack the understanding to decide it for yourself, find out the rulings of earlier scholars and follow only those who were most pious and steadfast in following the *sunnah*. Do acquire the knowledge of those sciences which help to develop you intellectually, but always keep it in mind that they are merely the means and appliances and not an end in themselves. Has it not been made

> obligatory on you to disseminate knowledge until the usages and practices of Islam become evident and dominant in a country inhabited by Muslims? But you did not tell the people about Islamic practices and caused the people to be engaged in unreceived rites and customs."[17]

How much was Shāh Waliullah fascinated by the *hadith* and what a reverential regard he had for the earliest compilers of *hadīth* can be seen from a letter he wrote to one of his colleagues describing the merits and services of Imām Bukhāri.[18]

Enthusiasm for Hadith

It has already been mentioned earlier that when the Shāh took leave from his mentor Shaikh Abū Tāhir Madani, the latter recited a couplet which said :

> I have forgotten the pathways all,
> Save that leading to your lodge,

The Shāh promptly replied : 'I have unlearnt everything I had read, barring that pertaining to *hadīth*.'

Shāh Waliullah's life bears out that he remained true to what he had said to his mentor ; he engaged himself for the rest of his life in the teaching, exposition and propagation of the *hadīth*

No sooner than the Shāh returned to India that he devoted himself wholeheartedly to the promotion of the study of *hadīth* in the country. It did not take long for the seminary known as Madrasa Rahīmiyah to become the foremost institution for *hadīth* studies attracting students from every nook and corner of the country. It had students from such far off places as Sind[19] and Kashmir,[20] besides those from nearer districts. Apart from Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz who took the place of his father and continued his mission, the Madrasa had the honour of producing several eminent scholars of international fame. Syed Murtaza Bilgarāmi, popularly known as Zabīdi (1145-1205/1732-1791), wrote the *Tāj-al-Uroos Sharh Qāmoos* and *Ithāf-us-Sādatil Muttaqīn li Sharh Ihyā 'Uloom id Dīn* which carved out a place for him among the scholars of Arab countries. He used to have polemical

disputations with the scholars attached to court of Egyptian Sultans. Qāzi Thanāullah Pāni Pati (d. 1225/1713), a spiritual disciple of Mirza Mazhar Jān-i-Jānān[21] who wrote the *Tafsīr-i-Mazhari* and *Mālā Budd* had also been a student of the Shāh.

India thus became, perhaps for the first time in its history, due to the efforts of Shāh Waliullah, a centre of *hadīth* studies comparable to Yemen and some of its scholars were hailed as teachers of *hadīth* even in Hijaz.[22] Nawab Syed Siddīq Hasan Khān has alluded to the illustrious services of Shāh Waliullah to the cause of *hadīth* in his two Arabic couplets in these words:

Whoever comes to your door, all his limbs get engaged in rehearsing the *hadīth*,

Eyes speak of its coolness hands rejoice of its wealth, heart speaks of the contentment and peace and the ears announce the virtuous talk they hear.

In the above couplet the different Arabic words used for the limbs allude to the earlier scholars of *hadīth* such as Qurrata bin Khālid al-Sadusi, Sillata bin-Ashīm al-'Adwi, Jābir bin 'Abdullah and Imām Hasan Basri.

Writings of Shāh Waliullah

The Shāh wrote a number of works on *hadīth* and its allied subjects. A brief description of these is given here.

1. *Musaffa*—A commentary on *Muwatta* of Imām Mālik in Persian.

2. *Musawwa*—A commentary on *Muwatta* in Arabic.

Both these works were written by the Shāh to illustrate the way of teaching *hadīth* and drawing legal rulings from them. They also show the depth of his knowledge and insight into *fiqh* and *hadīth*. The Shāh gave precedence to the *Muwatta* of Imām Mālik in the six most authentic works of *hadīth* and assigned it the same place as given to *Ibn Mājah* by others. He always pleaded to give it precedence in teaching of the subject. He writes in his Will.

"When one has attained proficiency in Arabic, he should be taught *Muwatta* with the chain of narrators through

Yahya b. Yahya Masmūdi. No deviation should be made in this regard, since it forms the central work in *hadīth* literature. Its study is of great merit. I have studied it thoroughly."[23]

3. *Sharh Tarājim Abwāb Sahīh Bukhāri.* The commentaries on *Bukhāri* have always been deemed essential for higher studies in *hadīth* with the result that every generation of scholars has attempted a new commentary adding new dimensions to its significance. The Shāh wrote this work in Arabic. It was first printed by the Dā'iratul Ma'ārif, Hyderabad in 1323/1905. Thereafter Ashah-ul-Matāb'e of Delhi included the work as introduction to the *Sahīh Bukhāri* published by it.

4. *Majmu'a Rasā'il Arba'a* is a collection of four short tracts and includes *Irshād ila Muhimmātil Asnād* and a *Tarājim-al-Bukhāri* (a short article of one page different from the *Sharh Tarājim*).

5. *Al-Fadhl al-Mubīn fil Musalsal min Hadīth in-Nabi al-Amīn-al-Nawādir min Hadīth Saiyid-ul-Awā'il wal-Awākhir.* This brochure sets forth the merit of compiling forty *ahādīth*. Earlier scholars have penned treatises on the subject in their times but the Shāh has collected smaller yet significant *ahādīth*. It needs to be committed to memory and taught to the students

6. *Musalsalāt.* The Shāh has also written several treatises not properly on the subject of *hadīth* but indirectly connected with it which need to be gone through as preparatory works for *hadīth* studies. These works evince his depth of knowledge and insight into the science of *hadīth* and the manner in which *fiqh* and *hadīth* can be harmonised. They also show his breadth of vision in a dispassionate evaluation of different works on the subject including their authors. Actually speaking they speak of the moderation and poise of the Shāh with which he had been gifted by God. The books falling in this category are :

(1) *Al-Ansāf fi Bayān-i-Asbāb al-Ikhtilāf :* Two epilogues are included in the *Hujjat Allah-al-Bāligha* which cover 22 pages and are divided into four sections. According to the publisher,[24] these concluding chapters were included in only one manuscript

of the *Hujjat*. In the concluding lines of these epilogues, the Shāh says :

> "I had decided to write a treatise under the title *Ghāyat al-Insāf fi Bayān-i-Asbāb al-Ikhtalāf* in which I wanted to discuss in some detail the reasons for differences illustrating them with examples and evidences but I could not find time for it. However, while dealing with the issue in this work *(Hujjat-Allāh al-Baligha)* I thought it proper to pen whatever I had in mind at the time, since it was then easier to do so."[25]

It seems that the Shāh was able to find time to re-write this portion, with certain additions. The treatise subsequently completed makes certain additions and omissions in the epilogue spoken of earlier.

The *Al-Insāf* is a unique work on the topic and has seen several reprints in India and other countries. It was also published in Egypt, first in 1327/1909 by Shirkata al-Matbū'āt al-'Ilmiyah and then by Maktabata al-Mansūrah. I have before me another copy brought out by Dar-un-Nafā'is, Beirut which covers 111 pages of average size. It has been checked and edited by the noted Tradtionist Shaikh 'Abdul Fattāh Abu Ghuddah of Egypt.

(2) *'Iqd al-Jid fi Ahkām al-Ijtihād wal-Taqlid.*

(3) *Al-Mubhāth al-Sab'e* of *Hujjat-Allāh al-Bāligha.*

The portion of the *Hujjat* extending from the second chapter of the first part to the last portion of the second one gives a logical and convincing exposition of the secrets and wisdom of *hadith* and the method of its practical application for deduction of juridical rulings in a way typical with the Shāh – unequalled by any scholar either before or after him. It is regrettable that certain people studying or even teaching the *Hujjat* sometime skip over this part as if it were of less consequence.

Consistency between Fiqh and Hadith

The intellectual and educational circles in the Islamic world had been divided, since a long time, into two schools of *fiqh* and *hadith*, each shaping its development independently of the other.

Very often the cleavage once engendered never allowed them to close their differences. The juristic schools took note of the *hadīth* only when they deemed it necessary to seek justification for the view held by them on a legal question, or when they had to rebut the criticism levelled against them for holding an incorrect view, or else to demonstrate the seemliness of their own juristic ruling in comparison to another school of *fiqh* In the teaching of the *Sihāh*, the jurisconsults normally tried to explain away the *ahādith* not in conformity with the views of their school or brought forth those which helped to verify the accuracy of their stand. If the classical work of any school of jurisprudence based its arguments pertaining to any legal issue on the *ahādith*, its followers having aptitude and competence to undertake research in *hadith* normally limited their studies to the examination and elucidation of the *ahādith* referred to in such a classical work.[26] These were undoubtedly praiseworthy intellectual endeavours to further the cause of their own schools of *fiqh*, still they could neither be deemed as efforts to re-evaluate the legal issues nor an essay at bringing out the compatibility of the *fiqh* and *hadith*.

The different schools of jurisprudence had been converted into iron moulds which could be broken but neither bent nor expanded.[27] Those who adhered to any particular school of jurisprudence considered their own school to be hundred per cent faultless save for some remote possibility of human error. The prevailing thought has been succinctly expressed in an adage which says: "Our way is primarily exact and flawless with a remote possibility of error, but those of others are basically wrong and unreceived with some prospects of validity." The result of this way of thinking was that the four juristic schools (Hanafite, Mālakite, Shāfe'ite and Hanbalite) which had been acknowledged since the earliest times as sects within the main body of orthodox Islam, and whose founders were undisputedly revered as pious and saintly souls, were drifting apart with the passage of time and their differences were degenerating into public debates which often turned into brawls and violent clashes. Even worse was the lot of those scholars who left any juristic

school to follow the *hadīth* in devotions according to their own understanding. Shaikh Muhammad Fākhir Zā'ir (1120-1164/ 1611-1654) of Allahabad had to face popular resentment since, as some scholars assert, he dared follow the non-conformist path of the *Ahl-i-Hadīth*.

A significant achievement of the Shāh which constituted a part of his endeavour for the regeneration of Islam as well as propagation of the *hadīth* and restoration of the Prophet's *sunnah* was to establish the rapport between the *hadīth* and *fiqh* in order to combine and reconcile the four juristic schools. His efforts in this direction were in fulfilment of the inspiration claimed to have been received by him from the holy Prophet that God would bless his efforts for the consolidation of the Muslims in a particular way.[28]

In so far as Indian sub-continent is concerned, no effort seems to have ever been made earlier in this direction. The absence of any such attempt is explained by the peculiar historical and literary developments in this country. India had remained, ever since the advent of Islam in this country, under the Turk or Afghan suzerains. Both these races had not only been Hanafites from the time of their conversion to Islam but also its zealous supporters.

The Mālikites and Hanbalites were unable to gain an entry into India for about eight hundred years. Shāfe'ite school had some adherents in the southern coastal regions, but it remained limited to certain parts of Madras, Karnataka, Bhatkal and Kerala. Only Malabar had a preponderance of Shafe'ite school since a number of scholars, mystics and merchants belonging to that school had settled there after emigration from other countries. It could also not produce scholars and traditionists, save a few[29] like Shaikh Makhdūm Faqih 'Ali Mahāyami (d 835/1432), the author of the *Tafsīr Tabsīr-al-Rahmān* and *Taisīr-al-Mannān*, Shaikh Makhdūm Ismā'il Faqih al-Sakkari al-Siddiqi (d. 949/ 1542) and Makhdūm Shaikh Zain-ud-din (d. 928/1522), who could have exerted an influence on the intellectual circles of the northern India, or obliged the Hanafite scholars to study the

Shāfe'ite system of jurisprudence. Even those scholars of India who happened to undertake a journey to Hijaz for the study of *hadith*, preferred to receive education from the Hanafite scholars, mostly those who had migrated there from India or Afghanistan.[36] Hijaz was then included in the Turkish dominion whose dominant juristic school was Hanafite since the Turks also belonged to that school.

Shāh Waliullah was the first scholar from India whose chief tutor was the great Shafe'ite scholar Shaikh Abu Tāhir Kurdi Madani. Shaikh Abu Tāhir left a lasting impression on the Shāh because of his depth of knowledge, personal charm, spiritual perfection and breadth of vision. The Shāh has spoken of his tutors in Hijaz in the *Insān al-'Ayn*. They include Shaikh Tāj-ud-din Qalā'i who was a Hanafite scholar of *hadith* but his another mentor Shaikh Muhammad Wafd Ullah b. Shaikh Muhammad b. Muhammad b Sulaimān was a Mālakite. During the time the Shāh remained in Hijaz the leading scholars and teachers, particularly those of *hadith* originally belonged to Yemen or Kurdistan who were mostly Shāfe'ites. All these factors contributed to acquaint the Shāh with jurisprudence and distinctive features of the Shafe'ite school. Similarly, he got an opportunity to make himself informed of the Mālikite and Hanbalite systems which had not been available to any earlier Indian scholar owing to geographical, political, and cultural reasons. This made a comparative study of the different juristic schools easier for the Shāh in comparison to his predecessors.

The Shāh left for Hijaz in 1143/1730, when he was 30 years of age, after spending 12 years in the profession of teaching. He was, however, gifted with a bent of mind pre-disposed to an undogmatic attitude and reconcilation of differences, aptly expressed by the mystic Rūmi in one of his couplets :

You have come to bring communion,
And not to make separation.

He had already made up his mind to strive for bringing about a greater conformity between the *hadith* and the *fiqh* and it was for this reason that he had started giving preference to the

juristic opinions of the *hadīth* scholars over those of different schools of jurisprudence. He had written in *Al-Juz al-Latīf fi-Tarjumata al-'Abd al-Dhāyif :*

> "An study of the four juristic schools and their principles of jurisprudence as well as the *ahādith* on which they base their arguments has led me to prefer the juristic findings of the *hadīth* scholars. This inclination was backed by divine influence. Thereafter, I was seized with a longing to make the pilgrimage to the two sacred Mosques."[31]

The Shāh disliked the approach of narrow-minded followers of the different juristic schools (who never allowed even the least deviation from their stand) as well as the Zāhiriyah sect (which rejected the *fiqh* and denounced the founders of juristic schools despite their depth of learning and piety). He criticized both these groups decrying them as extremists and guilty of immoderation. He held that the 'truth was in-between'; neither the former were absolutely correct nor the latter.

In the *Hujjat Allah al-Bāligha* he writes :

> "The basis for juristic deduction, on the one hand, and following the *hadīth* literally, on the other, are both grounded in true religion and scholars have at all times acted in accordance with both these principles. It is only that some have attached a bit more importance to the deductive approach than to the literal adherence of the *hadīth* while others have taken a contrary course. It is not at all proper to ignore either of these principles to which commonality of both the groups is accustomed. The right course in this matter lies in bringing about a reconciliation between the two so that what is wanting in one is made up by the other. This was the view held by Imām Hasan Basri "[32]

The Shāh also writes in his *Wasīyat Nāmah :*

> "Scholars who are well-versed both in the *fiqh* and *hadīth* should be followed in petty matters, but the major

juristic issues should be constantly checked with the Book of God and *hadith* of the Prophet (peace be upon him)."

Again he says :

"It is necessary for the Muslims to keep on correlating the rulings based on analogical deduction with the Qur'ān and the *hadith* for they can never afford to be unmindful of it."[33]

The Shāh had been mentally and educationally groomed in an atmosphere pervaded by the Hanafite school of jurisprudence and therefore he was conversant as well as appreciated the distinctive features of that school like any other scholar belonging to it. He acknowledged its merits and wrote on different occasions that owing to various historical, intellectual, political and cultural developments the Hanafite (as well as Shafe'ite) *fiqh* had come to receive greater attention, it was more polished and had a unified sequence, more commentaries on it were written and better exposition of its principles was made then could be claimed for any other juristic system. He wrote about Imām Abu Hanīfa :

"Imām Abu Hanīfa occupied a very high place in the *ijtihād* (interpretation) and *istanbāt* (application) of law adopted by the school of jurists like Ibrāhim Nakha'i and other equally eminent scholars. In his interpretations he has shown a deep insight in bringing out the rationale and reasons for his legal opinions. He took keen interest in working out the details of specific juristic issues."[34]

At the same time, the Shāh held Imām Mālik in the highest regard and considered his *Muwatta* as one of the most authentic collections of *hadith*, which was in his view an indispensable work on the subject.[35]

On the other hand he paid tribute to the thoroughness and clarity of the Shafe'ite school, held it as nearest to *hadith* and acknowledged the perspicacity of Imām Shafe'i.[36]

In regard to Ahmad ibn Hanbal, the Shāh writes in the *Hujjat Allah al-Bāligha* :

> "Among these jurists and traditionists, the one most eminent, outstanding in his knowledge of *hadīth* and having a deep insight in juristic matters was Imām Ahmad ibn Hanbal while Is'hāq b. Rāhūyah occupied the place next to him "[37]

The Shah had cultivated a moderate and balanced view by going through the works and biographies of the founders of all the four juristic schools which had made him realise their deep knowledge and vision in religion as well as the great services they had rendered to the Muslims. This could not be expected from the scholars who had remained attached to a particular school and were unable, for various reasons, to step beyond the limits of their own juristic school.

The Moderate View

A distinguishing feature of Shāh Waliullah's revivalist endeavour which was the result of his instinctive perception, was the moderate and balanced approach he had adopted in regard to *ijtihād* (individual reasoning) and *taqlīd* (the unquestioning acceptance of the rulings of earlier jurists of one's own school). The Shāh's approach in this matter showed his strong commonsense, realism and discernment. On the one hand, there were scholars who deemed it incumbent on all Muslims, whether a scholar or a commoner, to follow the Qur'ān and Sunnah and to derive legal rulings directly from these sources. They considered *taqlīd* to be forbidden. This way of thought, though not explicitly spelt out by them, is the logical conclusion of the views expressed in the writings of the scholars of this school, headed by 'Allama Ibn Hazm among the earlier academicians. But this was impracticable since it was beyond the competence of every Muslim to exercise individual reasoning in legal matters.

On the other hand, there were those who considered *taqlīd* obligatory for every Muslim and held the opinion that the least deviation from it amounted to waywardness and errancy almost in the same way as the former group deprecated *taqlīd* of any particular school of jurisprudence. Those who favoured *taqlīd*

closed their eyes to the fact that the adoption of any particular juristic school was just a means to keep the common people away from following their own whims and personal predilections, to protect the Muslim society from confusion and anarchy, to bring about orderliness and uniformity in religious observances and, finally, to make it easier for the common people to abide by the injunctions of the *shari'ah*. But they took the means for the end and insisted on it so dogmatically that the entire issue which pertained to legal methodology was ossified as if it were an article of faith, abiding and immutable.

The viewpoint of the Shāh in this regard was nearer to the spirit of *shari'ah*. He drew inspiration from the practice followed in the earliest era of Islam which showed greater practical sense and feasibility since it met the demands of human life and psyche. In a chapter dealing with the practice followed by the people upto fourth century A.H. and thereafter in the investigation and scrutiny of religious issues he has given in the *Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha* a detailed account of the method of legal inquiry of those times. He writers:

Practice of Muslims During the Earliest Era

"It should be known that prior to the fourth century of Islamic era there was neither any consensus among the people on juristic issues nor they blindly followed any particular school of jurisprudence. Abu Tālib says in the *Qūt-al-Qulūb* that treatises on law (i.e. compilations of juristic opinions) came into existence later on. In the first two centuries it was not customary to repeat the findings of earlier jurists and the people neither adhered to any particular school of law in formulating their juristic opinion nor deemed the view held by any scholar on any issue as binding for those belonging to that school.

"I may add that after the first two centuries inferences began to be drawn from general to particular cases, but it is certain that during the fourth century the people

were not used to follow any particular school of law, nor they limited their enquiries and interpretations and citations of the legal rulings to any one school. This is clear from the usage of those times.

"The *ummah* (Muslim Society) consisted of two classes: one of the *'ulama* (scholars) and the other of common people.

"In the matters accepted by consensus, that is, those in which there were no differences between the common people and the majority of scholars, the people followed the practice of the law-giver (i.e., the holy Prophet). They learnt the method of performing ablution, bath, offering prayers paying the *zakāt* or similar devotional and obligatory duties from their parents or teachers and scholars of their towns, and acted on them. If any new issue cropped up, they used to enquire from any scholar learned in *fiqh* nearest to them, irrespective of the juristic school to which such a scholar belonged.

"In so far as the elites were concerned, they had sufficient knowledge of the *ahādith* of the Prophet and practice of the companions to guide them and hardly needed anything else for their guidance. They were invariably aware of the *ahadith* categorised as well-known or genuine, accepted by one or the other eminent jurist and for the rejection of which there was no valid reason. They also had the coinciding dictums of the companions and their successors which could not be disputed by any one. If, in regard to a particular issue, they found nothing to satisfy themselves, either because of the discrepant versions handed down through different sources or for want of a valid reason to prefer a particular report or any other reason, they turned to the writings of the jurists and scholars preceding them. If they found two dictums on the same issue, they accepted the one more sound and

judicious irrespective of the fact that it was the view held by an scholar of Medina or Kufa. Those who were endowed with the ability of arriving at their own judgement through interpretation or derivation did so to explore the issues on which no clear precedent was available. Such scholars were however known as belonging to the school of their teachers or fraternity. Some of these, for example, were known as Shafe'ites or Hanafites. Even the scholars who preferred to follow the *hadith* (rather than any juristic school) were often taken as belonging to a certain school, if they were found in agreement with that school on a number of issues as, for example, Nassāi and Baihaqi were reckoned as Shafe'ites. Only such scholars were appointed, in those days, as judges or jurisconsults who possessed the ability of *ijtihād*. i.e., had attained a certain degree of competence in investigation and scrutiny of the principles of jurisprudence. They were known both as *faqih* and *mujtahid*. Then there came afterwards the people who opted for any particular school of law."[38]

Legitimacy of Taqlīd

Taking a reasonable, detached and realistic view in the matter, the Shāh considered *taqlīd* justified for the man who followed a particular juristic school or one of the great jurists in order to give allegiance to the holy Prophet and his *shari'ah*, in case he found himself incompetent to discover religious injunctions or what was attested by the Book and the *sunnah*. There can be several reasons for *taqlid*, said Shāh Waliullah. One may be illiterate, or may not have the leisure to engage in study and enquiry, or may lack the resources to discover the directives, or else to draw any inference from them. In this connexion the Shāh has cited Ibn Hazm's view-point that *taqlīd* is forbidden since it is not permissible for any Muslim to accept the statement of anyone save the Prophet without adequate

reason. Thereafter he writes:

"What Ibn Hazm says will not hold good for a man who does not give allegiance to anyone save the Prophet (on whom be peace); for, he considers permissible and forbidden only what has been allowed and prohibited by Allah and His Apostle. But, as he has not directly received knowledge about the sayings and doings of the Prophet (on whom be peace), nor he has the ability to reconcile such reports and draw inferences from them, he merely relies on a pious and God-fearing scholar with the confidence that the scholar is only an exponent and commentator of the Prophet's *sunnah*. How can this man be blamed if he discards the scholar the moment he comes to know that his earlier estimate was not correct? How can such a man be deemed as opposed to the *sunnah* and the *shari'ah*?

"Everybody knows that questions have been asked and juristic opinions given ever since the time of the Prophet (on whom be peace). It hardly matters whether a man always consults one jurisconsult or different jurists on different occasions. How can this be deemed as unlawful if the intention of this man is seemly and he sincerely desires to abide by the injunctions of the *shari'ah*? Since we do not maintain that Allah has sent down His Law from the heavens to any jurisconsult or that the jurisconsult is immaculate and obedience to him is a must for us, adherence to such jurist and preceptor is merely because we consider him to be a scholar of the Qur'ān and *sunnah* of the Prophet (on whom be peace). Whatever advice is given by such an scholar will either be based on a clear directive of the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* or derived from these in accordance with the principles laid down for it. He may, however, be led to believe, in all sincerity, that a certain matter is based on a given stipulation found in the Book or the *sunnah*, although

his view may not be correct. In this case the jurist will be said to have unintentionally made a wrong analogical deduction, even though he may maintain that his opinion is based on what the Prophet (on whom be peace) has said about the stipulation necessary for taking that view. In the circumstances, his analogical deduction can be attributed to the directive of the Prophet (on whom be peace) as understood by him. Had this not been an accepted rule, nobody would have ever followed any jurist. But if we come to know of an authentic *hadith* with reliable chain of narrators contradicting the legal opinion of that jurist or Imām, and we reject the *hadith* by giving preference to the analogical deduction of the jurist, then who would be a greater wrongdoer than us and what would be our excuse when we shall tomorrow be facing God."[39]

Characteristics of the Four Juristic Schools

With this sharp and judicious analysis of *taqlid*, the Shāh also throws light on the wisdom of following the four juristic schools by a great majority of Muslims all over the world in a slim but valuable tract entitled *'Iqd al-Jid fi Ahkām al-Ijtihād wal-Taqlid* He says :

"Remember that there is a great security in following the four juristic schools while a great risk is involved in rejecting them. There are several reasons for it. First, the Muslims have always been agreed upon reposing confidence on the earliest generation of Muslims in the matter of ascertaining the rules of *shari'ah*. The successors of the companions relied on their predecessors, those who came after them on the earlier generations and so on. The scholars in all ages have reposed trust in their forerunners. Reason also commends this course for the two sources of knowledge of *shari'ah* are its transmission

and drawing inferences. Transmission is possible only when the later generation is willing to learn from its predecessor. For drawing an inference it is equally necessary that the views of the earlier generations should be known so that any conclusion drawn does not go beyond the sphere of its frame of reference and thus contravene the consensus of the Muslim community on any issue. Hence it is essential to rely and seek help of our forerunners. This is correct of all other branches of learning, arts and crafts, since these can be learnt only from and keeping company of their instructors. It seldom happens that one can acquire expertise without following this course; one can argue that this is possible, but actually it never happens.

"Now that it is established that to repose trust in the findings and dictums of our forbears is essential, it becomes necessary that the sayings on which we have to rely have been transmitted through reliable sources; they have been included in well-known compilations; have been duly examined and analysed in a way that those to be given precedence over others are clearly spelt out; those commonly accepted are sifted from others approved only by a few; the source of a directive is known; its exact implication is ascertainable; different sayings are capable of being reconciled and the rationale of injunctions is also explicit. Any juristic school and its juristic opinions lacking these conditions cannot be relied upon. There is not a single school of law formulated in the ages gone by, save these four schools, which fulfils all these conditions."[40]

The Shah adopted the course of moderation between *ijtihad* and *taqlid* which chimed with the objectives of the *shari'ah*, human psychology and the realities of life. He approved of *taqlid* on the conditions that intention was seemly and proper and

one was clear in his mind about emulating the Prophet (on whom be peace) and following the injunctions of the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*. He permitted dependence on an scholar solely on the ground of one's confidence in his being an exponent and interpreter of *shari'ah* by virtue of his being learned in the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*. Such reliance was also to be accompanied by a willingness to discard a scholar in case the trust reposed in him proved to be misplaced. He held that a believer should not have the least hesitation in accepting a directive contained in a *hadith* if the opinion of the jurist was found to differ from it.

> "But nay, by thy Sustainer! They do not (really) believe unless they make thee (O Prophet) a judge of all on which they disagree among themselves, and then find in their hearts no bar to an acceptance of thy decision and give themselves up (to it) in utter self-surrender."[41]

Necessity of Ijtihād

Shāh Waliullah considered *ijtihād* (interpretation or discovery of law from its sources within the frame-work and in accordance with the methodology laid down for such an exercise) essential for every age in order to meet the changing social needs of the time even though he acknowledged the distinguishing features of the four schools of Islamic law, paid tribute to the greatness as well as the services rendered by the earliest traditionist-jurists and recommended to make full use of their scholarly findings. He declared that to ignore these schools was fraught with danger and was also harmful for the community. At the same time, he also pleaded that *ijtihād* was but a natural outcome of the changes brought about by the march of time and hence necessary for not only the expansion of the Islamic law but also for the guidance of mankind in accordance with the divine revelation. In his view it was the duty of religious scholars to exert themselves for *ijtihād* in all times to come. In his introduction to *Musaffa*, he writes :

> "*Ijtihād* is a *fard bil kifāyah*[42] in every age. The *Ijtihād* I am speaking of here does not mean that it should be

of the same calibre as that of Imām Shāfe'i who was second to none in his knowledge of the canons for reception and rejection of *hadith*, Arabic grammar and syntax etc., and who never had to depend on any one in legal interpretation or drawing an inference. I mean here the affiliated *ijtihād* which signifies finding out the injunctions of the *shari'ah* from the original sources and interpreting and drawing inferences on the lines indicated by the great jurists, irrespectives of the school followed for the purpose.

"And when we say that *ijtihād* is incumbent during the present times (and there is a consensus among scholars on this point), it is because new issues crop up rapidly and they cannot be encompassed beforehand. It is essential to know the command of God about such matters, for what has already been written or compiled on the subject may be insufficient or likely to give rise to controvercies. Such issues cannot be solved without re-examining the arguments given therefor. Certain rulings handed down from the great jurists are also intersected and cannot be fully relied upon. Therefore, these matters cannot be solved unless the issues are re-examined in accordance with the methodology laid down for legal reasoning and a fresh examination of the issues.[43]"

Notes and References :

1. The brochure contains the opening speech of the writer in a seminar held on 13th September, 1981, which was organised by the Rabita al-Ālam al-Islāmi on the '*Role of Hadīth in the Promotion of Islamic Climate and Attitudes.*' The article was subsequently published in Arabic, English and Urdu.
2. Q. 33 : 21.
3. Q. 3 : 31.

4. *Hākim, Mustadrak.*
5. The six most authentic compilations of *hadīth.*
6. *Saviours of Islamic Spirit,* Lucknow, 1983, Vol. III, pp. 208-9.
7. *Role of Hadīth in the Promotion of Islamic Climate and Attitudes,* Lucknow, 1982, pp. 29-35.
8. *Ibid.,* p. 37.
9. *Ibid.,* p. 39.
10. Hakīm S. 'Abdul Hai, *Islāmi Uloom wa Funoon Hindustan Men,* (Urdu trans. Abul Irfān Nadwi), Azamgarh, 1970, pp. 195-96.
11. *Ibid.,* pp. 197-198.
12. Khalīq Ahmad Nizāmi, *Hayat Shaikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddūh, Dehlavi,* p. 43.
13. For the large number of scholars of *hadīth* and the treatises and commentaries written on the subject one can refer to Hakīm Syed 'Abdul Hai's *As-Saqāfata-al-Islāmiyah fi al Hind* or its Urdu translation published under the name of *Islāmi Uloom wa Funūn Hindustān Men.*
14. Introduction to *Mafiāh Kanūz-al-Sunnah.*
15. Introduction to *Hujjāt Allāh-al-Bāligha.*
16. *Kalemāt-i-Tayyabāt,* p. 172.
17. *Tafhimāt-i-Ilāhiya,* Vol. I, Dhabel, 1936, pp. 214-15.
18. *Kalemāt-i-Tayyabāt,* pp. 167-168.
19. Muhammad Moin, a scholar from Sind, came to Delhi to be instructed by the Shāh in *hadīth.* His work entitled *Darāsāt-al-Labīb fil Uswatil Hasanāta bil-Habīb* reflects the thought of Shāh Waliullah. He died in 1161/1748. (*Nuzhatul Khawātir,* Vol. VI).
20. Khwāja Muhammad Amīn Kāshmīri (d. 1187/1773) was one of the devoted students of the Shāh. He came to be known later on as Muhammad Amīn al-Waliallāhi, and taught Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. He wrote several treatises. (*Nazhatul Khawātir, Vol. VI*).
21. *Nuzhatul Khawātir,* Vol. VII.
22. Two of those who studied in the Shāh's madrasa, Shāh Is'hāq Dehlavi and Shāh 'Abdul Ghani Mujaddidi taught *hadīth* to students in the two sacred mosques. (*Nuzhatul Khawātir,* Vol VII).
23. *Wasiyāt Nāmah,* p. 11.
24. Maktaba Salfia, Lahore.
25. *Hujjat-Allah al-Bāligha,* pp. 161.

26. An striking example of it is furnished by *Nasb al- Rāyata fi Takhrīj Ahādīth al-Hidāyah of Zaila'i,*

27. There have always been people who have discarded one juristic school for another, for example, abandoned Hanafite school for the Shafe'ite or vice versa, or forsaken all the juristic schools to follow the path of *Ahl-i-Hadīth,* but one has seldom claimed to adhere to a juristic school but ventured to follow the juristic opinion of another school on a particular issue. No exception in following a juristic school was deemed permissible since it was thought that disagreement on any issue from one's juristic school amounted to total rejection of the authority of the founder of that school.

28. *Fayūz-ul-Haramayn* p. 62.

29. A detailed description of such scholars can be seen in the *'Arab wa Dayār-i-Hind* by Khawājā Bahā-ud-dīn Akrami Nadwi of Bhatkal.

30. As, for example, Shaikh 'Ali Muttaqi of Burhānpūr, the author of *Kanz-al-Ummāl,* Qutb-ud-din Nahrwāli, Mulla 'Ali Qāri Harawi Makki, Shaikh 'Abdul Wahhāb Makki, Shaikh Muhammad Hayāt Sindhi etc.

31. *Al-Juz al-Latīf fi-Tarjumata al-'Abd al-Dhayīf,* included in the *Anfās-al-'Ārifin,* Matb'a Mujtabā'i, pp. 203-204.

32. *Hujjat Allah al-Baligha, op. cit.* Vol. I, p. 156.

33. *Wasiyat Nāmā* (Persian), pp. 2-3

34. *Al-Insāf fi-Bayān-i-Asbāb al-Ikhtalāf,* Dār-un-Nafāis, Beirut p. 39.

35. See Introduction to *Musaffa.*

36. *Al-Khair al-Kathīr,* p. 124; *Qurata 'Ainayn,* p. 242.

37. *Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha,* Vol. I, p. 150

38. *Ibid.,* Vol. I, pp. 152-153.

39. *Ibid.,* Vol. I, pp. 155-156.

40. *'Iqd al-Jīd,* pp. 36-38.

41. Q. 4 : 65.

42. A command which is imparitive upon all Muslims, but if a sufficient number perform it, the same will be supposed to be sufficient or equivalent to all having performed it.

43. Introduction to *Musaffa,* Matb'a Farūqi, Delhi, p. 12.

VII

Exposition of the Rationale of Shari'ah and Hadith.

(Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha)

The *magnum opus* of Shāh Waliullah, the *Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha*, is a comprehensive and cogent work presenting a synthesis of the Islamic creed, devotions, transactions, morals, social philosophy, statecraft and spirituality. All these have been balanced and integrated in such a perfect manner that they appear to be jewels of the same necklace or links of the same golden chain. It also does not suffer from the usual weaknesses found in most of the old works, written apologetically or aggressively. This moderation and balance is the result of the Shāh's deep and wide knowledge of *hadith* and his bent of mind fostered by the study of the Prophet's character as well as keeping company with pious and virtuous scholars. Few works can compare the compendious yet clear and cohesive exposition attempted in the *Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha*,[1] which laid the foundation of a new dialectical theology for the modern age of reason. It is thus a work which can satisfy any truehearted man endowed with common sense, provided, of course, he can appreciate and ponder over the profound investigations of the Shāh. So far as we are aware there is no other work in any language known to us, written for the investigation of the truth of any religion

on a rational basis or if it has been written, it has not come to light.

India or rather the entire world of Islam was ripe, by the close of twelfth century A.H., owing to several social, intellectual and pedagogic developments, to enter into a new age of reason which was to stimulate a general taste for discovering the rationale of the precepts and directives of *shari'ah*. This new trend would have surely misled many a mind and pen; for, the *hadith* and *sunnah* were to be singled out, due to peculiar circumstances of the time, for criticism and creating doubts in their authenticity[2]. Nobody could have succeeded in meeting this challenge if he had not been well-versed in the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*, philosophy, theology, ethics, psychology, sociology and economics (of his time) and also possessed the purity of spirit known as *ihsān* in Islamic idiom.

All these factors demanded that before the new era began, some one should deal, within human limitations, of course. with the issues that were going to be raised shortly. Such a man need not have been impeccable nor his knowledge was to transcend his own time and space; he was bound to reflect the then current of knowledge and his pattern of education; yet, he had to be a faithful interpreter of the *hadith* and *sunnah*.

Writing about the reasons and impulses which led him to pen the *Hujjāt Allāh al-Bāligha*, the Shāh says:

> "The most delicate and deep as well as sublime and glorious aspect of the science of *hadith* consists of its wisdom and rationale and characteristics and significance of religious injunctions which impart insight into them and save man from confusion and eccentricity."[3]

A Delicate Topic

Any description of religious truths, involving the wisdom and rationale behind a given injunction of the *shari'ah* is, however, an extremely delicate task since even a passing emphasis, a penchant for any particular way of thought or prevailing concepts of the time can mislead the writer to dwell more on the material

benefits and advantages to be had from such a precept than to emphasise the real purpose of the religious practices which ultimately aim at creating a living consciousness of God, following His commands and achieving eternal salvation.

A treatment of the subject can divert one's attention to seek for an evolved structure of the society for cultural or political purposes completely neglecting the spirit of *iman* (faith) and *ihtisab*[4] (conviction) and thus injure them irreparably. Take for instance the objectives of *salat* or ritual prayer which can be described as a military exercise, helpful in instilling a sense of discipline and following the leader; *saum* (fasting) can be explained as beneficial for health; *zakat* (poor-due) as a tax on the rich for the benefi of the poor; and *haj* (piigrimage) can be made out as the occasion for an international annual conference for considering the issues facing the Muslim world.

These were the dangers, not imaginary since several such examples can be cited, which had made the task so delicate that only a scholar with a deep knowledge of all branches of religious sciences, versed with the object of divine revelation and prophethood and having a settled belief peneterating into his heart and soul could acquit himself of this delicate task. None was more qualified to undertake this great venture than Shah Waliullah.

Earlier Writings

Thus Shah has made a mention of the endeavours made by earlier scholars but these were in his view, meagre and inconsiderable. He writes in the introduction to *Hujjat Allah al-Baligha*.

> "The scholars of old had tried to expound the rationale which have been given due consideration in legal matters. Those who delved into them later on have hinted at some very profound reasons, but these are also scanty. To delineate these issues now will not mean going against the consensus as nobody has left any fullfledged work on this subject nor laid down the norms and corollaries in a systematic manner."[5]

The Shah has referred to the writings of Imam Ghazzali

'Allāma Khattābi and Shaikh-ul-Islām 'Iz-ud-din b. 'Abdus Salām which allude, at places, to the wisdom of the *shari'ah*.[6] He has refuted the view that the prescriptive directions of the *shari'ah* need not have any design and goal or that there was no relationship between the actions and their retribution. He has based his arguments on the Quranic verses and *ahādith* in which such a relationship has been spelt out or the merit or demerit of any deed has been explained. He cites *ahādith*, on the authority of Caliph 'Umar and other companions, expounding the reasons for the excellence of certain deeds and observances or the disadvantages inherent in some of the forbidden acts.[7] He has controverted the assumption that the task was so precarious that it need not be attempted or that it fell in the category of 'modernism' or that it was fruitless and impracticable. He has also recounted the reasons why the matter could not be attended to by earlier scholars.[8]

The Shāh has stressed the desirability of expounding this branch of Islamic learning. He says that there may be *ahādith* which apparently contradict reason and some of the jurists have even discarded them on that ground. In such cases it becomes necessary, according to the Shāh, to re-examine them to find out whether such *ahādith* are really sensible and plausible.[9] Another reason given by him is the differences between various juristic schools. Some close their eyes to intelligibility of a *hadith*, some take recourse to its interpretation and explanation while others just accept its outward meaning. The differing standards applied by various groups, which were distemperate in his view, called for a fuller elucidation of the subject. He considered such an attempt not only permissible and useful but also the need of the hour and a great service to the cause of religion.[10]

Apart from the Shāh's realisation of the urgency of this task and his own experience, he had an inspiration from the holy Prophet which convinced him that a new interpretation of religion was required of him. He says, "I found an illumination within my heart which went on increasing. During my stay in Makkah I saw Imām Hasan and Imām Husain in a dream who gave me

a pen saying that it belonged to their maternal grandfather, the Messenger of Allah on whom be peace and blessings."[11]

Shaikh Muhammad Āshiq of Phulat, a cousin as well as a disciple who was a constant companion of the Shāh, was very insistent that he should undertake the task. He was fully aware of the capabilities of the Shāh besides being very intimate to him.[12]

Thus it was that God caused this momentous work to be written by the Shāh.[13]

Introductory Topics

The opening topics touched upon by the Shāh comprise discussions which demonstrate the essentiality of divine guidance, revelation, prophethood and the instruction and coaching man receives from them. The discussion centres round the basic concept of responsibility[14] in which he shows clearly that it springs from human nature. The capabilities man enjoys demand that God should charge him with responsibilities akin to angelic obligations and then reward him for them. It also demands that beastly inclinations, inherent in man's nature, should be interdicted and should also be punished for indulging in them.[15] The discussion by the Shāh shows his extensive comprehension of the nature of the animal kingdom, plant life and human beings as well as such disciplines as physics medicine etc. He has established, on rational grounds, that the excellence man enjoys over the beasts and plants and the faculties and inherent dispositions he possesses naturally call for moral responsibility as well as divine guidance for the same. The meaningful expressions he uses in this connexion are *al-takaffuf-al-hāli* (beseeching involuntarily) and *al-takaffuf-al-'ilmi* (soliciting intellectually).

The Shāh argues that apart from faculties of reason and speech possessed by man, he has also an urge to advance and augment the capacities of his intellect and enterprise; he has an ambition of attaining perfection and, at the same time, this impulse is insatiable. These instincts, common to all human beings, connote the Grace of God, a manifestation of His

sustenance *(rabūbiyat)*[16] and mercy, which constitute the ultimate cause of the creation of angels, cosmic turmoils and raising of the messengers by God. The Shāh holds the view that worshipful devotions and inclination to moral imperatives are as much instinctive to human beings as flesh for carinvorous animals, grazing for other quadrupeds and obedience to the bee-queen by the honey-bees with the sole exception that in the case of animals these are innate propensities while man acquires these through knowledge, exertion, inspiration or revelation and imitation.[17]

The Shāh regards, requital i.e., reward and punishment to be the natural consequence of man's moral liability. He enumerates four reasons for it: one, the requirement of his characteristic features; two, the influences of *malai'alā*[18] (superior angelic sphere); three, the demands of *shari'ah*, and four, a consequence of prophethood and divine dispensation to bless man with success.[19] He further explains that the people differ in their actions, morals and level of attainment because of their natural dispositions. The convergence of angelic and beastly qualities, the proportion of their weakness and strength and their interrelationship have been divided by the Shāh into eight categories. He gives the characteristics of all these different combinations and their dominant features The discussion on the subject besides being a distinctive feature of the work, also bears witness to the Shāh's intelligence and sound logical reasoning.[20] It also shows his deep insight into human psychology.

Importance and Effect of Deeds

Importance of human actions, their effects on personality of the doer and the world at large, as well as their aftermath on the world to come have been delineated by the Shāh. He says that a time comes when these actions produce the same influences (either because of the agreeableness or displeasure of the superior angelic sphere) as are found in the charms and amulets described by the doctors of old.[21]

These preliminary discussions help the reader to understand the subsequent discources which deal with the natural dispositions

of man, his moral liability and the reasons therefor, their influences, the consequences of divine sustenance and mercy, the significance of human actions, correlation between social order and human existence and, finally, the facts of mute reality and intangible categories of things and ideas.

Sociability

Anyone going through the *Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha* will not fail to mark that the Shāh's percipience and realism as well the trend of fast changing events in his day had led him to conclude that the people will in the near future seek to know the rationale and significance of *shari'ah*, particularly of the teachings, and injunctions contained in the *hadith* and *sunnah* of the holy Prophet and the relationship between religion and human life. They would, he seems to have anticipated, endeavour to discover the correlation between human life and divine guidance in the wider context of social relationship and test the validity of these teachings according to their utility in that sphere.

The Shāh wrote the *Hujjat*, primarily to expound the purpose and reality of the *shari'ah* and to present a rational interpretation of the *hadith* and *sunnah* but before dealing with the matters defined as permissible and forbidden which are related, basically to rewards and punishments and salvation, he initiates the discussion with the physical phenomena and human life on whose understanding depends the formation of a healthy social order and a blooming culture. The Shāh has coined the word *irtifiqāt* which, so far as our knowledge goes, no Muslim theologian, philosopher or socialogist had used earlier, at least in the sense he has employed the term.

Significance of the term

'*Irtifāq*', in the Shah's terminology, signifies lawful dealings between individuals, cooperation and collaboration and the means adopted for mutual benefit or for an agreeable and moderate social existence.[22]

The Shāh has, in this way, reviewed individual and

collective welfare of the people pertaining to this world and the next. He holds the view that the cosmic order should not merely be in harmony with the legal and moral order preached by the prophets of God but should also help and reinforce its purpose. He was the first among scholars of ethics and economics to determine a close relationship between the norms of ethics, on the one hand, and economics and socialogy, on the other. He showed that when the rapport between the two is rent asunder, both economics and ethics undergo a crisis which has its impact on religion and morals as well as society and culture. Collective morals of a people are devastated, according to the Shāh, when external compulsion brings them to the point of impoverishment. For man, endowed with spiritual and angelic potentialities, is then forced to earn his daily bread like the beasts unmindful of all other higher and nobler aspirations.

Citizenship, its Essence and varieties

The Shāh gives a comprehensive and unique definition of citizenship, whose centre he calls *al-madina* or the city. In the chapter entitled *Bab-i-Siyasatil-Madina* of the *Hujjat* he says:

> "*Al-madina* (the city) implies inhabitants of a town who have a certain degree of contiguity and cooperate in certain matters, though living at different places."[23]

He goes on to define civic system in these words:

> "*Siyasat-i-Mudun* (civic system), in my view, is the discipline expounding the means to preserve and protect affinity and inter-relationship already existing among the citizens."[24]

The social life of the citizens is then explained by him as follows:

> "The inter-relationship found within the citizens of a town makes it like an individual; it is composed of a number of ingredients but can be conceived as a composite personality."[25]

The Shah categorises sociability into two grades. One of it is elementary and essential, which is to be found even in the

undeveloped stage such as in those living in rural areas. The other is developed and corporate which is usually a mark of the inhabitants of a city. There are two more stages of it. The first of these is expressed by an orderly social order and administrative set-up which leads to the fourth stage of *Khilāfat-i-'Aammah*. The Shah lays great emphasis on the maintenance of affinity and inter-relationship between the outlying and far-flung areas and deems it as much essential as between the dwellers of any particular town even in the primary stage of crystallization of citizenship.[26]

Nature of Earnings

The Shāh's discussion on *irtifāqat* also throws light on the motives of earning a living. In this connection he does not forget to point out the unnatural and un-ethical means of earnings. He says:

> "There are people who, as a matter of course, find it difficult to earn their living through legitimate and honest means with the result that they take to the ways harmful for the public and societal life as, for example, theft, gambling begging or illegal and immoral transactions."[27]

The Shāh's writings on *irtifāqāt* make certain observations which allude to his perception of the factors responsible for rise and fall of civilizations. He writes in the *Hujjat* that:

> "When people develop an unusual daintyness and fastidiousness due to excessive affluence then those who cater to their needs take up jobs of a peculiar type, each monopolising a certain occupation."[28]

He also invites attention to economic activities harmful for the society. He says that if all the people were to prefer a certain occupation, say, if everybody takes up trade and abandons agriculture or gets enlisted in the armed forces, it will be detrimental for them. In his views agriculture is like food while commerce, industry and administration are like salt. He also pointed out the twin reasons for devastation of the country in his times. One of it, the Shāh says, constitutes the self-seeking hangers-on of

the public treasury who hardly do any work.[29] The other cause, as stated by him, was the heavy taxation on the cultivators, traders and craftsmen. He warns his compatriots: "The people in our times should realise these facts and take heed of them."[30]

Disproportionate diversion to recreation and entertainment is viewed by the Shāh as one of the factors responsible for crippling the society. He cites the then craze for chess, hunting and pigeon-breeding as a few examples of it.[31] In the same way he holds that turning a blind eye to such lewdness and crimes as no sane and upright person would brook if committed against his own person, are detrimental to the society and ultimately cause the downfall of the state.[32]

Blessedness

In another section of the *Hujjat* dealing with blessedness, the Shāh points out that attainment of an state of blissful grace and heavenly felicity is of crucial importance to man. It can be gained by purification of the self and subordinating one's beastly propensities to angelic disposition.[33]

Blessedness, the Shāh explains, has at its base, four precepts for which Apostles were sent by God. These propositions constitute the celestial law or the fundamental standards for all religions and the injunctions promulgated by them. They are the effective means for realising the ends of prophethood.

1. Purification (cleanliness which helps one to meditate and establish communion with God).
2. God-consciousness and contrition through penitence.
3. Tolerance, generosity and ethicalness.
4. Justice (impartiality which helps to establish sound administration).[34]

It is through these means, according to Shāh Waliullah, that man's personality can find its fulfilment through a living awareness of God and can create a healthy society which also carries through the objective for which Apostles were sent with God-given laws.

Shāh Waliullah, then goes on to describe the means to realise these four qualities,[35] as well as the hurdles that impede their

progress. These hinderances are three in number. First, instinctive and psychological inhibitions; secondly, external influences; and thirdly, upshots of faulty education and mistaken beliefs.[36] The Shāh then tells how to overcome these drawbacks.[37]

Creed and Devotions

The fifth section of the *Hujjat* discusses virtue and sin which is in fact, the main topic of the book.[38]

The first principle of virtue taken up by the Shāh is *tauhīd* since it prepares one for remorse and repentance which open the way to divine grace. The Shāh has categorised *tauhid* into four grades and explained what really constituted the *shirk* (polytheism) of the pagan Arabs.[39] He explains the reality of *tauhid* (Oneness of God) and thereafter the significance of faith in the Divine Attributes, His Omnipotence and Decree, and the homage to be paid to the signs and marks of God (the chief among which are the Qur'ān, the Kaba, the Prophet and the prayer). Then the Shāh switches over to devotions and obligations and discusses the rationale of ablution, bathing, prayer, poor-due, fasting and pilgrimage.[40] The treatment of these subjects is brief and confined to the principles, but it contains expositions which can hardly be found anywhere else. To cite an instance, in his discussion about the philosophy of prayers, the Shāh points out that it consists of three parts, standing, genuflexion and prostration. Instead of any descent from a higher to a lower stage, it actually leads to an ascent of the spirit from the lower to the higher. The Shāh asserts that this is the natural course demanded by reason. The Shāh also explains why devotion to God, prescribed in the ritual prayer, does not lay emphasis only on meditation and reflection on God or His continuous remembrance (as has been the custom of neo-platonists, esoterics, Hindu *yogis* and certain misguided mystics). He says that meditation and contemplation would have been helpful or even possible only for those having an inclination for it. They could alone make spiritual progress through it. But the prayer being a composite of introspection and action, concentration and physical movement becomes effective

and fruitful for men with all types of mental attitudes. There is thus nothing more beneficial than the prayer in protecting against baneful influences and subordinating one's inclinations to reason.[41]

The Shāh has alluded to fasting and pilgrimage in this section of the *Hujjat* but discussed them in greater detail in its second part. The motivations and reasons therefor as given by the Shāh were never expounded earlier by any scholar. A reference to these will be made later on.

Community Affairs and the Prophet

The sixth section of the *Hujjat* reviews an extremely important issue under the title 'Discussion relating to Affairs of the Community'.[42] Examining the matter in all profoundness, which shows his discernment and penetrating insight, the Shāh explains why people needed the prophets of God for showing them the right path and why human intellect and reason were not enough to meet this paramount need of humanity. He goes further to expound the characteristics of the messengers of God and the conditions necessary for their success in achieving their objectives. The treatment of the subject by the Shāh is quite unconventional and different from that normally found in other theological works explaining the need of prophethood. Unlike the treatment of the subject by other scholars, the Shāh's discussion is rationally satisfying, His discourse on the status and characteristics of prophethood reveals his comprehension of not only the essence of *shari'ah* and reality of prophethood but also his deep insight into human psychology and the motivating factors of ethical behaviour. Here we shall give a summary of the Shāh's analysis of the subject.

Comprehensive Prophethood

Shāh Waliullah maintains that comprehensive prophethood is the most perfect form of apostleship. Comprehensive prophethood, says the Shāh, is granted to that prophet who guides and prepares a nation or community to call the people to his teachings and ensures continuance of the prophetic mission. Apostleship

is vested in the person of the prophet while the community entrusted with the duty of propagating the mission of the prophet becomes indirectly responsible to discharge the obligation laid on it. The prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace) was, according to Shāh, a comprehensive apostleship which made his entire followers responsible for carrying out his prophetic mission. This obligation is explicity stated by the Quran:

> You are the best community that has ever been raised up for mankind. You enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency. And you believe in Allah.[42]

The holy Prophet even used the word *b'atha* meaning sent or commissioned while addressing his companions. He said:

> You have been sent (or raised up) to make things easy and not to create difficulties.[44]

The portion of this chapter throwing light on the marked traits and disposition of the prophets and their manner of discourse and propagation of the mission is the most outstanding. It shows how meticulously he had studied the lives of the prophets and pondered deeply over the Qur'ān.[45]

Morality in Byzantine and Iranian Cultures

The age of Ignorance was not peculiar to Arabia; it was a universal decadence of spiritual, moral, social and economic values, though spearheaded by the Iranians and the Byzantines. The cultures of these two nations were popular and followed by others, although their degeneration was most pronounced in their principal towns and the societal usages of these peoples.

The picture of Iranian and Byzantine societies depicted by the Shāh and the reasons given for their dissoluteness, beats the description given by earlier historians and socialogists. His narration is vivid as well as captivating in its mode of expression and style.

A short extract from the writing of the Shāh is given here which illustrates his penetrating insight into history and his facility to pin-point the causes leading to the decay of these

civilizations.

"Ruling over the world for several hundred years, without any let or hindrance, the Iranians and the Byzantines had completely overlooked the after-life and, thus, induced by the devil, they had become extremely fastidious and fussy in regard to leading an easy and pleasureable life. They vied with one another in luxury and polish and took pride in their refinement. Their leading cities had attracted expert artisans and craftsmen from all parts of the world whose constant endeavour was to refine and invent new artifices of decoration and comfort which became the prevailing taste in no time. This process continued giving satisfaction to the affluent class. The standard of living had become so high that it was considered below dignity for a grandee to wear a girdle and tiara worth less than a hundred thousand *dirhams*. Anyone without a magnificent palace, unadorned by fountains, baths and gardens, not in possession of healthy horses and good-looking slaves and unable to serve dainty and appetizing victuals to his guests or to wear the most costly dresses was looked down upon among his compatriots. It would be tedious to give these details here. One can very well imagine the conditions than obtaining from what we know of the princes[46] in our own country.

"This flourish and pageantry had become a part of their life and culture: they had embedded so deeply in their hearts that these could not be extricated in any way.....It was an incurable disease encompassing the whole society, from the nobility down to the poorest sections. It was a great calamity which had not left untouched anybody, neither the rich nor the poor, making all solicitous and worried to somehow maintain themselves in pomp and pretension.

"That these luxuries could not have been obtained without

incurring huge expenses, had led to heavy taxation on the cultivators, traders and craftsmen. These classes were pressed hard to pay exorbitant levies and if they refused to pay them, expeditions were sent against them and they were punished for insubordination. On the other hand, if they complied with these enervating demands, they had to work like asses and bulls tilling the soil and irrigating the fields. They were allowed to breath only to work and had no respite from life-long toils and travail

"An inevitable result of the masses living like beasts of burden was that they could never find any time to give attention to after-life or eternal salvation. These were the times when not a single soul watchful of his religion could be found in a whole country."[47]

Some other Topics

The Shāh then reverts to other topics. In one of it he says that religions spring from the common source, but their laws and rituals differ owing to the need of the people and the time for which they are meant. He goes on to explain why despite their common origin the divergence in rites and observances becomes accountable. After going into the reasons of exhortation, inducement and warning for preaching the faith, the Shāh justifies the need of a religion which abrogates the earlier ones; how such a religion can be saved from aberrations; what are the devices and forms of deviations; how they try to gain acceptance; and, what are the means employed by the *shari'ah* to prevent these aberrations from finding a way into the true beliefs and practices. He also gives a detailed account of the conditions prevailing in the pagan past and the reforms affected by the holy Prophet.

The Place of Hadith

The seventh chapter of the *Hujjat* covers the issues relating to *hadith*, such as, the correct method of appreciating the import

of a *hadīth* and *sunnah*, deduction of laws from them, knowledge handed down by the holy Prophet and the methodology of drawing inferences from them, types and grades of works on *hadīth*, the rules for giving preference to or reconcilation between the *ahādīth* etc. The Shāh's treatment of all these issues is very sharp, clear and effective. He gives examples of differences of opinion on certain minor issues between the companions of the Prophet and their successors, between different juristic schools and those who preferred to follow the *ahādīth* directly, and gives the reasons therefor. He describes in considerable detail, the way people used to enquire and ascertain legal injunctions upto the fourth century of Islamic era (the tenth century A. D.). This description is also unique and enlightening and not touched upon in other theological and legal works.

Duties and Devotions

The Shāh has deliberated upon the *ahādīth* dealing with creed devotional exercises, transactions, piety and self-purification, stages of spiritual ascent, lawful means of earning a living, abjuration and cooperation, management of affairs, caliphate, judiciary, *jihād*, etiquettes, social relationships, temptations of later times, forebodings and auguries of the doomsday, in short. all matters of importance, on which any light is shed by the sayings and doings of the holy Prophet. He also presents, in this way. a quintessence of the life and character of the Prophet (peace be upon him). A distinguishing feature of his exposition is that all these issues are linked with the behaviour and morals and culture of mind and manners of the people. Actually, the Shāh intended to demonstrate how *hadīth* could be utilized to influence the way of life and help man in all the diverse situations. At the same time, he also demonstrated their compatibility with reason. The Shāh had foreseen that the significance and utility of *hadīth* literature would be assailed by its detractors in the near future and hence he wanted to provide a shield against mental confusion resulting from the denial of *hadīth*. The Shāh's elucidation of the four ritual devotions of Islam is simply

incomparable and perhaps the most distinctive part of the *Hujjat*. We are giving here, by way of example, a few extracts from it which shed light on the rationale and wisdom of *saum* (fasting) and *hajj* (pilgrimage).

In regard to judiciousness of prescribing the period and timings of fasting by the *shari'ah*, the Shāh writes: 'If the right to exercise one's own judgement (about the number and timings) of fasting is conceded, it will open the door of evasion; the *shari'ah's* injunctions in regard to commanding the good and forbidding the disreputable will be thwarted; and this foremost mark of obeisance in Islam will fall into negligence."[48]

Again, about the period prescribed for fasting he remarks: 'It was also necessary to determine its period and duration so that no room was left for any excess or slackness. But for it, some people would have observed so little of fasting that it would have become fruitless, while others would have carried it so far as to inflict upon themselves hardships approximating to death through starvation. In truth, fasting is a remedy to counteract the poisonous effects of sensuality and therefore, it is essential that it should be administered in the right quantity."[49]

The Shāh draws a distinction between the two types of fasting i. e., one in which complete abstinence is observed from all the things harmful to the purpose of fasting and the other which allows only partial abstinence. He says that the former is desirable from the view-point of human psychology and experience as well as justified by reason.

> "There are two ways of restricting one's diet. One is to reduce the quantum of diet and the other is to have such a long interval between two meals that this object is achieved. *Shari'ah* recommends the latter course since it is symptomatic of a correct appraisal of hunger and thirst and strikes at the root of carnal appetites, and a definite reduction in whose force and intensity is achieved by it. On the contrary, in the former case these results are not obtained owing to continuity of meals. Besides, it is not possibe to lay

down any general rule in the former case because circumstances differ from person to person. A man may be used to taking half a seer of food while for the other only half of it may be sufficient. Thus, if any restriction of this kind were to be prescribed it would be favourable to one but harmful for the other."[50]

The Shāh points out that moderation should be the rule in determining the duration of fasting.

"It is again desirable that the duration of fasting should not be so long as to entail unbearable hardship as, for instance, three days and three nights; for, this would not be in keeping with the objective of the *shari'ah* besides being impracticable for most of the people."[51]

In the case of *haj* also, the Shāh is incomparable in his reasoning. He writes:

"One of the objectives of the *haj* is the preservation of the legacy of Prophet Ibrāhīm and Prophet Ismā'īl, both of whom can rightly be claimed as the leaders and founders of *millat-i-hanifi* in Arabia. The blessed Prophet was raised up to make this *millat* victorious and dominant in the world.

"The declaration of God that *the faith of your father Ibrahim is yours*[52] makes it incumbent on us to protect the inheritance of the leader of this *millat* by cultivating his personal characteristics[53] and conserving the rituals of *haj*. As the holy Prophet once said. "Stay at places set apart for the *haj* for you are the inheritor of your father's legacy."[54]

Giving another reason for the *haj* being made an obligatory observance the Shāh says:

"Just as it is necessary for a government to undertake a periodical survey to know who is loyal to it and who is disloyal, who is a conscientious worker and who is a shirker, and also that, through it, its power and

authority may increase and its citizens and officials come closer and know one another, the *millat* too stands in the need of *haj* in order that the true believers may be separated from the hypocrites and the people may come in ranks to the *darbar* (royal court) of Allah; they may know each other and profit from their company in matters good and desirable—for these things are generally acquired by closer acquaintance and association."[55]

"Since the *haj* is an occasion on which people come together, it serves as an effective protection against sinful customs and practices. Nothing can compare with it in so far as recalling the memory of the leaders and mentors of the *millat* and engendering the urge for emulating their example are concerned."[56]

At another place the distinguished scholar remarks:[57]

"Included among the objects of *haj* is the purpose for which governments hold fairs and exhibitions. People come from far and near to see them, they meet one another and learn about the precepts of their state and pay their respects to its hallowed places. In the same way, the *haj* is the fair or exhibition of Muslims in which a display of their glory is made, their energies are pooled together and the name of their community shines in the world. It is stated in the Quran:

And (remember) when We made the House (of K'aba) a resort for mankind and a place of refuge."[58]

Comprehensibility of the Hujjat

Another feature of the book is that apart from law, *hadīth*, creed, devotions and transactions it also goes on to discuss management of affairs, caliphate, judiciary, professional behaviour and etiquettes which normally fall in the sphere of morals, sociology and civics and are not expected to be dealt with in any theological or legal treatise.

Spirit of Piety and Self-Purification

The Shāh has, in addition to the discussion on above-mentioned topics, tried to present a well-coordinated system, in the light of the Qur'ān and the examples set by the holy Prophet, which can help man to attain propinquity to God and advance spiritually to the higher stages. The section dealing with *ihsān* or the spirit of piety extends from page 66 to 110. In it he recommends only that process of spiritual purification which is attested by genuine *ahādith*. He lays emphasis on deeming oneself in Divine presence, sincerity of intention and firm determination as the necessary aids of spiritual contemplation and prescribes curative measures by way of accepted devotions and remembrances for the troubles and worries that beset the path of spiritual progress. He also analyses the causes of ignoble conduct, suggests measures for getting rid of them and acquiring moral virtues through the ways commended by the *shari'ah* and *sunnah* of the blessed Prophet.

The Shāh has, in this connection, presented a compendium of invocations handed down from the Prophet, supplications approved by the *shari'ah* and entreaties for repentance and explained the conditions necessary for their being answered by God. He does not lose sight of the physical needs of man but insists on sincerity of intention and complete presence of mind and heart and explains the resulting effect in the absence of these imperatives. He says:

> "Let it be understood clearly that intention is the spirit and devotion represents its body. The body cannot remain alive without soul, but the soul remains in existence after it has departed the body. Still, life cannot be perceived in the absence of the body.
>
> "That is why Allah says: 'Their flesh and their blood reach not Allah, but the devotion from you reaches him.'[59]
>
> "And the Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings) is reported to have said: Actions depend on intentions."

The Shāh then explains the *niyat* or intention in these words:

> "By *niyat* or intention I mean that positive mental attitude which induces one to do something with the confirmation that the reason for doing a thing or abstaining from it is the assurance by God, through his apostles, to reward those who will obey Him and punish those who will disobey Him."[60]

Before concluding this section, the Shāh has given a selection of *ahādith* talking about inculcatian of moral virtues, discharging the rights of the people and betaking a virtuous way of life which can be helpful in attaining personal excellence, piety and spiritual progress. He has also given the different stages and stations of spiritual flight which enlighten soul, create a living awareness of God, purify the self and prepare man for earning the pleasure of God—all conducive to gaining approval of the celestial regions and supreme happiness.

Jihād

Shāh Waliullah devotes a chapter of the *Hujjat* to *jihād*.[61] It begins with words which are both startling and thought-provoking; which could have been written only by one who had given thought to rise and fall of nations and the divine purpose behind creation of the universe.

> "Know that only that *shari'ah* is complete and perfect which enjoins *jihād*."[62]

The Shāh has thereafter elucidated the purpose of *jihād*, justified it both on rational grounds and religious imperatives and described its merits and the reasons therefor.[63]

In short, this work is unique in its comprehensiveness and depth as well as in presenting an integrated view of Islamic teachings and wisdom of the *shari'ah*. It also abounds in sagacious and well-thought-out remarks dispersed on its pages. 'Allama Shibli has correctly assessed the worth of this work in his *'Ilm-al-Kalām* in these words;

> "The intellectual decline that had set in among the

> Muslims after Ibn Taimiyah and Ibn Rushd, or rather in their own times, had left no hope that another mastermind would again rise among them. But the Providence had perhaps to display its feat that a man like Shāh Waliullah was born latterly whose acumen has overshadowed even the brightness of Ghazzāli, Rāzi and Ibn Rushd."

He writes further :

> The Shāh has not written any work on theology and hence it would not be proper to consider him a theologian but his book entitled *Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha* which expounds the rationale and wisdom of *shari'ah*, is in fact a masterpiece of theology."[64]

Another eminent scholar Maulana 'Abdul Haq Haqqāni, the author of *Tafsīr Haqqāni* and *'Aqā'id-i-Islām* introduces the *Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha* in his own translation of the book under the name of *Ni'amat Allāh is-Sābigha* in these words :

> "This work is on a subject none had ventured to write earlier on it. The benefits of the Islamic *shari'ah* is the topic of the work and the purpose of writing it is to let everybody know that the commandments of God and His Apostle do not circumscribe the life of man in any way, nor are they against human nature. That this exposition may create an attraction in man's heart for these teachings so that he may never abandon them under the influence of any dissembler. The secrets and wisdom of religious injunctions have been manifested in it with the help of all the different branches of learning."[65]

Notes and References :

1. Among my contemporary Arab seholars I have found 'Allama 'Allāl al-Fāsi of Moracco, author of *Maqasid al-Shari'ah al-Islamiyah wa Makarimha* and al-Ustāz Muhammad al-Mubārak, Ex-Director

of Kulliyāt as-Sharī'ah and a minister of Syrian government acclaiming the *Hujjat*. They have paid glowing compliments to the work.

2. See the Author's *Role of Hadith in the Promotion of Islamic Climate and Attitudes*, Lucknow, 1982.
3. Introduction to *Hujjat Allāh al-Bōlighā*, p. 3.
4. *Ihtisob* according to the terminology of *hādīth* and *sunnah* connotes the conviction or absolute confidence in the recompence promised by God on acting on a religious precept as well as the eagerness and earnestness generated by such a conviction. Bukhāri records a *hadīth*: 'Whoever observed fast in Ramadhān out of sincere faith and hoping for the reward from Allah, then all his previous sins will be forgiven.' A similar *hadīth* has been narrated about the *Lailatul Qadr*.
5. Introduction to *Hujjat*, p. 3.
6. *Ibid*,, p. 6.
7. *Ibid*., pp. 5-6.
8. *Ibid*., p, 7.
9. *Ibid*., p, 9.
10. Introduction to *Hujjat*, p. 9.
11. *Ibid*., p, 3.
12. *Ibid*., p. 4.
13. *Hujjat Allōh al Bōligha* was first printed at the instance of Jamāl-ud-dīn a scholar-Minister of Bhopal (d. 1299/1882) who also met the cost of printing the work in 1286/1869 by Matb'a Siddiqi, Delhi, under the supervision of Muhammad Ahsān Siddiqi (d. 1312/1894),. It was reprinted again under the orders of Nawāb Syed Siddiq Hasan Khān (d. 1307/1890) in 1296/1879 by the Matb'a Bulaq, Egypt, where it was reprinted twice thereafter. In 1395/1978. 'Āta Ullah Hanif brought out an off-set of the Egyptian edition from Al-Maktaba Al-Salfia, Lahore. Another edition of the work has recently been brought out jointly by Dār al-Kutub, Cairo and Maktabatul Muthanna, Baghdad, with a detailed introduction of the author from the pen of well-known scholar and the leader of Ikhwan, Syed Sābiq. But the work still needs careful editing and annotation.

Two translations of this work have been published in Urdu. The first of it, in two parts, was the rendering of an erudite scholar 'Abdul Haq Haqqāni under the title of the *Ni'amat Allāh as-Sābigha*.

The translation, completed in 1393/1886, was printed at Matb'a Ahmadi, Patna in 1312/1895. It was reprinted by Noor Muhammad from As'hahul Matābe, Ārām Bāgh, Karachi. Another Urdu rendering of the book by Khalīl Ahmad Israeli under the title *Āyat-Allāh al-Kāmilah* has been brought out by Matb'a Islāmi.

But the *Hujjat* is not one of those works whose literal rendering in any other language can adequately serve the purpose and that is why Urdu knowing people have not been able to derive benefit from it.

14. The words in the Quran "Verily We! We offered the trust" in verse 33 : 72 refers to moral responsibility which is the human sense of answerability for his conduct. The 'trust' is obviously the trust of free choice to abide by Divine commandments. See *Hujjat*, p. 19.

15. *Hujjat*, p. 20.

16. *Rabubiyat* rendered as sustenance embraces a wide complex of meanings not easily expressed by a single word in English. It comprises the ideas of complete authority and ownership over anything as well as rearing, sustaining and fostering it from its inception to final completion.

17. *Hujjat*, pp. 20-24.

18. The Shāh has explained *'ālam-i-mithāl* (the world of similitude) and *malā'i'ālā* (superior angelic sphere) in his works. The two concepts are drawn from the Qur'ān and the *hadīth*.

19. *Hujjat*, p. 25.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

22. This rendering of *irtifāqāt* is by Maulana Abdul Haq Haqqanī.

23. *Hujjat*, p. 44.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

29. Giving an example of such parasites the Shāh mentions those soldiers, scholars, mystics, poets and other similar groups of persons who get used to the bounties of the royal court or fief holders without rendering any service to the state. He critises the

feudal system which was eating into the vitals of the state finances and maintaining an assemblage of indolent and contemptible persons. This shows the Shāh's insight into the causes of the downfall of Mughal empire.

30. *Hujjat*, p. 45.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 56 gives the details.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58 give the details.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
39. The matter has been dealt with in the fifth chapter of this book.
40. Detailed discussion can be found in second part of the work.
41. *Hujjat*, p. 73.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.
43. Q. 3 : 110.
44. *Hujjat*, p. 84.
45. *Ibid.*, p 86.
46. The allusion is to the later Mughal Kings and princes.
47. *Hujjat*, Vol. I, p. 104—107.
48. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 37.
49. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 37.
50. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 37.
51. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 31.
52. Q. 22 : 78.
53. The term refers to ten characteristics : the cutting or trimming of moustaches, the growing of beard, the brushing the teeth with *miswāk* (twig), the cleaning of the nose with water, the cutting of the nails, the washing of the phalanges of fingers, the plucking of the hairs of the armpit, the removal of the hair under the naval, the purification after urination with water and circumcission. (Abū Dāwūd on the authority of 'Āyesha). About the tenth item the narrator says that he was not sure if it was circumcission or rin-

sing of mouth but Qāzi 'Āyāz and Imām Nawawi are definite that it was circumcission.

54. *Hujjat* Vol, II, p. 42.
55. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 59-60.
56. *Ibid.*
57. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 42.
58. Q. 2 : 125.
59. Q. 22 : 37.
60. *Hujjat*, Vol. II, pp. 83-84.
61. *Ibid.*, pp. 170-178.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 170.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 170.
64. Shibli N'omāni, *Ilm-ul-Kalām*, pp. 109-110.
65. Haqqāni, 'Abdul Haq, *Nia'mat Allāh āl-Sābigha*, Introduction.

VIII

Right Guided Caliphate
Izalat al-Khafa 'an Khilafat al-Khulfa

Significances of Izālat al-Khafā

Another remarkable work by Shāh Waliullah, the *Izālat al-Khafa 'an-Khilafat al-Khulfa*,' is also an incomparable work in several respects. As scholarly and gripping work which exhibits the depth of the Shāh's thought as well as his brightness and profound reflection over the Quranic verses. Anyone who goes through it, unless he is not biased, will be convinced that the author is not merely a schoolman but blessed with divine grace and intuition in composing this work. The Shāh himself says in its introductory remarks :

> "The fact is that divine effulgence inundated the heart of this weakling with the knowledge about this matter so exhaustively that he was absolutely convinced that affirmation of the caliphate of these persons (the first four caliphs) constituted one of the fundamental principles of Islamic creed. So long as this essential foundation is not firmly established, none of the *shari'ah's* injunctions will find a sound and secure support."[1]

Several eminent scholars who were deemed as masters in the science of logical reasoning but differed with the Shāh on a number of issues, had to acknowledge his erudition and penetra-

ting perception on going through this work. The author of *Al-Yan'e al-Jani*, Muhsin b. Yahya of of Tirhut says: "I noticed that whenever our mentor Maulana Fazl-i-Haq Khairābādi (d. 1278/1861) had some leisure, he was engrossed in a particular book. We found his gripping interest in the book unusual and tried to find out what was that work and who was its author. One day our teacher remarked, 'The author of this book is an ocean of immense expanse.' We then came to know that it was *Izālat al-Khafā* of Shāh Waliullah, a copy of which had somehow reached the Maulana."[2]

Among the celebrated scholars of the later times Maulana 'Abdul Hai Firangi Mahli (d. 1304/1887) was an outstanding academician. In his well-known work *At-T'aliq al-Mumjadda 'ala Muwatta al-Imām Muhammad* he says that "*Izālat al-Khafā* is the solitary and matchless book on its subject."[3]

Correlation between Hujjat Allāh and Izālat al-Khafā

In the *Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha*, the Shāh had presented a coordinated and comprehensive concept of Islam with reference to its way of life, culture, customs and social organisation. In it the Shāh had demonstrated that a healthy and vigorous society avoiding all excesses could not come into existence without accepting the creed of Islam and acting on the principles laid down by it for social behaviour. This scholarly work contained material which could satisfy the inquisitive minds and the intellectuals of the coming generations, but there still remained the need to elucidate the characteristics of a truly Islamic society, its objective and sphere of activity. He had to show, in the light of history as well as the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*, that the institution of *khilāfat* (caliphate) was meant to furnish a practical example to be followed by Muslims for all times to come. This was also necessary in order to clear the misunderstandings created long ago about this institution which had given birth to a schism in Islam. In fact, the predominance of Iranian nobility in the days of the Shāh had given rise to a sort of intellectual anarchy among the Muslims which had shaken not only their creed and social

behaviour but also endangered the continuance of their authority over the country. It had, in fact, made uncertain the future of Muslims in the country.

Contrary to the general opinion held by the populace who were not aware of the history and fundamental precepts of this splinter group, nor had any knowledge of their authoritative works, this faction was not just another juristic school within Islam. Its concept of Islam was different from that based on the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* and the grandeur and finality of prophethood. It was a school of thought in itself, running parallel to the accepted view of Islam. Its creed about Imamate, which makes it equal or even superior to prophethood in certain aspects is enough to bring out its fundamental difference with the accepted creed of Islam.[4]

In the prelude to the *Izālat al-Khafā*, the Shāh explains why he came to write it:

> "This mendicant Waliullah says that innovations of the Shi'ah's have taken roots and the common people have been deeply impressed by them. This has created doubts and unseemly ideas in the minds of certain persons about the right-guided caliphs."[5]

The Shah was not merely concerned with the doubts harboured by the people about the first four caliphs, his anxiety was even greater on account of the logical deductions that follow from this lack of confidence as, for example, the failure of Islam in its earliest times, inefficacy of the guidance provided by the holy Prophet, default in the preservation of the Qur'ān in its prestine purity, mistrust in the *sunnah* and *hadith* literature etc. He, therefore, says that "anyone who tries to question the legitimacy of the right-guided caliphate really tries to deny the basic principles of Islam. Such a man wants to demolish all the religious branches of learning."[6] Thereafter he adds: "In the transmission of the Qur'ān from the blessed Prophet to his followers, the right-guided caliphs constitute an essential link."[7]

The Shāh asserts that everything connected with religion like *hadith*, *fiqh*, consensus on any legal issue, unification of

the Muslim community, the spirit of piety later known as mysticism, sagacity in religious matters, discrimination between virtuous and vicious behaviours, civility and polity have been bequethed to the later generations by the first four caliphs. The entire *ummah* is obliged to them for their guidance.[8]

The reasonable and consistent course, after writing the *Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha*, which contained an intellectual and rational exposition of Islam, was that the Shāh should demonstrate how successfully these teachings had been translated into practical life and what was its effect on the society fashioned by it. He had to show how the corrupting influences of two rival civilizations nurtured by the age-old Byzantine and Sassanid empires were uprooted by this new civilization.

Earlier Writings on the Subject.

Islamic social order, state and its functions had been dealt with earlier only in a few treatises and these, too, were neither comprehensive nor possessed any depth. The first work on the subject was *Kitāb-ul-khirāj* by Imām Abu Yūsuf (113-182/731-797), a disciple of Imām Abu Hanīfa who also held the post of chief justice under the Abbasids, but it covered only the topics like the finances, sources of revenue, imposts etc. of the Islamic State.

Another chief justice Abul Hasan 'Ali b. Muhammad b. Habīb al-Mawardi (364-450/975-1058) wrote *Al-Ahkām al-Sultaniyah wal-Walayah al-Diniyah* which was the first notable dissertation on the subject. This work of 259 pages of an average size discussed the issues relating to Imamate and its legal justification, conditions necessary for its establishment, its duties and obligations, qualifications of the judges, charities, *jizyah* (poll-tax), *khirāj* (land-tax), punishments, regulation of law and order etc. It did not offer any comments on the justification of the right-guided caliphate or the character and attainments of the first four caliphs.

Another important work on the subject is *al-Ghiyāthi* or *Ghiyāth al-Umam fi al-Tiyāth al-Zulm*[9] which was written by the

great scholar and teacher of Imām Ghazzali. Abul Ma'āli 'Abdul Malik al-Juwaini (419-478/1028-1085), also known as Imām-ul-Haramayn or the religious preceptor of the two holy mosques. The work was in fact indited for the benefit of Nizām-ul-Mulk Tūsi (408-485/1017-1092), the Prime Minister of Malik Alp Arsalān and his son Malik Shāh Saljūqi, under whose able guidance the empire of Saljūqs reached its apogee.[10] This work deals with the injunctions of *shariah* in regard to Imamate, the qualities to be possessed by an Imām and his duties, administration of justice etc. It also goes on to discuss such questions as the course to be adopted by Muslims in the absence of an Imām or an unrighteous person usurping the Imamate by force of arms. Similarly, it examines such questions as obligation lying on Muslims in the absence of juris-consults mainly from a Shaf eite point of view. It, however throws no light on the importance and justification of the right-guided caliphate. The book s really a dissertation on the concept of Imamate and its main purpose is to refute the views expressed in Al-Māwardi's *Al-Ahkām al-Sultāniyah*

The third noteworthy work on this subject is *As-Siyāsah al-Shar'iyah fi Islāh al-Ra'iy wa al-Ra'iyyah* by Shaikh ul-Islam Ibn Taimiyah (661-728/1263-1328). In his introduction to this slim volume Ibn Taimiyah makes it clear that the purpose of writing this work is simply to narrate those fundamental postulates of the righteous state deputising for the prophethood which are equally binding on the rulers and the ruled. In fact this work by Ibn Taimiyah is an exposition of the Quranic verse

> "Lo! Allah commandeth you that ye restore deposits to their owners, and if ye judge between mankind, that ye judge justly.....That is better and more seemly in the end."[11]

The book[12] is divided into two parts; the first deals with *Al-Wilāyah* (public authority) and *Al-Amwāl* (finances) and the second discusses the limitations imposed by God and the obligation one ows to God and his fellow beings. This work by Ibn Taimiyah skips the legal and theological aspects and even the

historical role of the first four caliphs although he was most competent to examine these issues. Had he decided to do so, he would have undoubtedly made a great and worthwhile contribution to the subject. He has discussed some of these matters in the *Minhāj al-Sunnah* in which his fluent pen and encyclopaedic knowledge combine to present a refreshing account of the right-guided caliphate.[13]

Concept of Khilāfah in Islam.

The Qur'ān and the *hadīth* imply a cohesive community of the believers in the message of Islam preached by the holy Prophet. The expressions *ummah, millah* and *jamā'ah* convey this sense of cohesion since these terms are nowhere employed in the scripture and the *sunnah* just for a mob or multitude of people which never leave any lasting impression in the history of nations and civilizations. The Qur'ān rather speaks of bygone nations and distinct communities - sometimes giving the reasons for their prowess and domination, weakness and defect, incompetency of large numbers, wrongs being committed in the presence of righteous persons, ascendancy of the evil and suppression of the people—which demonstrate that a disorganised mob, howsoever numerous, has never had any worth or utility.

The great objective Islam has in view comprises the creation of a new type of relationship between the Creator and the creature and transformation of this bond into the life of the people in order to build a healthy social structure. It also wants to create a wholesome atmosphere in which peace reigns supreme and offers the fullest opportunity to the individual to discharge his obligations to God as well as to his fellow beings. It wants to create conditions in which man is enabled to develop himself morally and spiritually without being required to waste his energies and talents in removing the obstacles or fighting the disruptive forces which are inevitable in a disorganised society or very often result from man-made laws or an autocratic rule, or else mans's lust for power. A social set-up avoiding these pit-falls requires a God-given law having its roots in the overlordship of God and a

human caliphate to actualize the Divine will. Such a God-given law has, of necessity, to be obsolutely just, impartial and faultless while the caliphate has to enforce it in its true spirit and avoid, as far as it is humanly possible, favouritism and partisanship in any form either through commission or omission.

In order to achieve these social and moral objectives the Prophet has given instructions which are meant to transform Muslims into an orderly and well-knit society under a chief having distinctive qualities. He looks after their needs and interests. He is elected in the light of broad and flexible principles laid down by the *shari'ah*. If he is the supreme administrator he is known as *Khalifah* or *Amir-ul-Mūminīn* or *Imōm* but if he is a deputy nominated by the head of state or a locally elected executive to enforce the laws of *shari'ah*, or to act as a judge in their disputes or to organise the community's religious life, he is called an *Amir*.

The election of the caliph was a religious obligation so grave and urgent that all those companions of the Prophet who loved him most including Abu Bakr and members of the Prophet's household gave it precedence over the burial rites of the departed Prophet. The same procedure was followed after the death of almost all the subsequent caliphs. Ever since the election of Abu Bakr as the first caliph in 10/631 to the martyrdom of the Abbasid Caliph Mu'tasim Billah in 656/1258 the world of Islam never remained without a caliph except for a short period of three months and seven days when Caliph Mustarshid Billāh was imprisoned on the 10th of Ramadhan 529/ 24th June, 1135 by the Saljukid Sultan Mas ūd. But it was such a shocking and lamentable experience for the Muslims of the day that the whole city of Baghdad felt dejected and disconsolate. Ibn Kathīr writes about this event:

> 'It gave the people of Baghdad cold shivers and everyone felt extremely agitated. Certain persons dismantled the pulpits in the mosques, discontinued offering congregational prayers and women came out of their houses bare-headed lamenting and weaping at the

imprisonment and hardships of the caliph. People in other cities took the cue from citizens of Baghdad and the outcry spread rapidly to different regions. Malik Sanjar who gauged the gravity of the situation, advised his nephew to reinstate the Caliph and Malik Mas'ūd followed his advice."[14]

The elegy by poet S'adi of Shirāz, belonging to a city far distant from the centre of caliphate, on the martyrdom of Caliph Must'asim Billāh reveals the intensity and depth of regard Muslims had for the caliph. The elegy opens with the couplet:

For it has seen the kingdom of Must'asim crushed,
The heavens would better shed the tears of blood.

These events demonstrate the great regard Muslims had for caliphate and how disconsolate they felt in its absence.

A comprehensive Definition of Khilāfah

The Shāh was able to define caliphate, because of his deep insight into the scripture and the *sunnah*, law, theology and history of Islam, in a comprehensive yet precise manner. The words used by him for delineation of the concept are extremely suggestive. He writes:

"*Khilāfah* is the leadership of people united in a commonwealth which comes into existence for the establishment of religion including revival of religious branches of learning, institution of Islamic ritual observances, organisation of *jihād* and making necessary arrangements for the same as, for example, marshalling an army, remunerating the combatants and distributing the booty among them, creating a judicial system and enforcing the laws, curbing of crimes and removing public grievances, commanding the good and forbidding the wrong etc. All these functions have to be preformed by it as if it were deputizing and representing the Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings)."[15]

The Shāh goes on further to explain the term 'establishment

of religion' in these words :

> "When we take a view of the matter inductively proceeding from the particular to general propositions converging on a universal principle covering all the categories, we reach the conclusion that at the highest level of Universal principle comprising the common as well as special categories (that is, the Universal of univerals), it coincides with the truth that can be called the 'establishment of religion'. All other classes and categories are covered by it. One of the subordinate categories is the revival of religious knowledge which consists of the teaching of the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* and admonition and sermonizing. God says: "He it is who hath sent among the unlettered ones a messenger of their own, to recite unto them His revelations and to purify them, and to teach them the scripture and wisdom, though they have been before in gross error."[16]

Quranic Evidence in Favour of First Four Caliphs.

The most fascinating portion of this work is that in which the Shāh adduces Quranic verses in support of the caliphate of the first four caliphs. It demonstrates that they were rightly-guided to actualise the will of God in the given circumstances. The Shāh cites Quranic verses which clearly show (sometimes like a mathematical calculation) that no other person than these caliphs were hinted at in them for they alone were able to fulfil the prophecies contained in those verses. The Shāh shows that if the period during which these caliphs held the reins of caliphate were to be ignored, the Quranic predictions and promises would remain unfulfilled.

Of the various verses from the Qur'ān cited by the Shāh, we are giving here only two by way of illustration. One of these is a verse from the *Sūrat-un-Nūr* which reads :

> "Allah has promised those of you who believe and do good works that He shall make them to succeed (the

present rulers) in the earth even as He caused those who were before them to succeed (others), and that He shall surely establish for them their religion which He has approved for them, and He shall certainly give them in exchange security after fear. They shall serve Me and ascribe nothing as partner unto Me. And those who disbelieve thereafter, then those! they are the ungodly."[17]

The Shāh then says that the promises relating to *succeeding (the present rulers) in the earth* and *giving them in exchange security after fear* were made to the believers who were present at the time of revelation of *Sūrat-un-Nūr*; they were the companions of the holy Prophet and were striving for the cause of Islam. Therefore, the Shāh concludes, these assurances could not apply to Mu'awiyah and 'Abbās and their progeny. He adds that it was neither possible nor reasonable to deem that the entire Muslim community was to *succeed* the then rulers or be elevated to the office of caliphate; the divine pledge had of necessity to be redeemed through certain chosen individuals. Thereafter he writes:

"The expression *He shall surely make them to succeed* implies that a group among them will succeed as caliphs; obedience to God was the condition precedent for it; and, when this promise is fulfilled the religion shall have power and authority to establish, express and expose itself completely It also refutes the Shi'ite contention that the religion acceptable to God shall ever remain hidden and clandestine requiring its Imāms to practise *taqaiyah* or dissimulation. This is the reason given by them for duplicity of their Imāms who never had the courage to announce their creed publicly. The words *He shall surely establish for them their religion which He has approved* are clear enough to show that the religion which could not be publicly made known during the period when Muslim *succeeded (the earlier rulers)* was certainly not the

religion *which He has approved*.....The verse also says ; *He shall certainly give them in exchange security after fear* which shows that when the divine guarantee comes to materialise, those who succeed and all other Muslims will be unscared of any danger or apprehension f om the side of any religion or power. Contrarily, the Shi'ites claim that their Imāms were timid and diffident, they and their colleagues always pocketed insults and affronts and they never came out successful.....The divine assurance for making *them to succeed in the earth* was fulfilled through those first migrants in the way of God--for if these were not the successors or the caliphs, then the promise made by God has not been accompalished, nor shall it come to pass to the end of time—Allah is most sublime and Great from all these imputations."[1]

Another verse discussed in some detail by the Shāh belongs to *Sūr it-ul-Fath*. Briefly speaking, the Shāh narrates how in the sixth year of the *Hijrah*, the Prophet set out with a large number of his companions, on account of his dream of paying a visit to the K'aba, in the garb of pilgrims for performing *'Umrah* or the lesser pilgrimage. Because of the opportunity afforded for visiting the House of God as well as the apprehensions in regard to the inimical attitude of the Quraysh who still held the power in Makkah, some 1400 Muslims from Madinah accompanied the Prophet but the Bedouins held back either owing to fear or lack of sincerity. The historic pact of Hudaybiyah guaranteeing cession of hostilities between the Muslims and Qurayesh came to be signed as a result of it which has been described in detail in the works on *hadith* and biographies of the Prophet. It was at Hudaybiyah that the holy Prophet took the pledge of allegiance from his companions, known as *Bay·et-i-Rizwān*, and all those who took pledge were given the glad tidings of a clear victory in the near future through a revelation from God. The *Sūrat-ul-Fath* revealed on this occasion did not only promise the victory (the conquest of Khaybar in the beginning of 7/629) but also declared

that the desert Arabs who had lagged behind on this crucial moment will not be allowed to take part in the victorious expedition promised by God. The verse placing this ban on the Bedouins said :

> "Those who were left behind will say. when ye set forth to capture booty ; let us go with you. They fain would change the verdict of Allah Say ! Ye shall not go with us. Thus hath Allah said beforehand. Then they will say : Ye are envious of us Nay, but they understand not, save a little."[19]

The revelation went on to say that though the Bedouins were forbidden to join the oncoming victorious expedition as a penalty for their malingering, they would soon thereafter be called upon to fight a people who would, first, be formidable and well-equipped, and secondly, shall fight or surrender The Bedouins were also forewarned that if they would respond to the call to arms on that occasion, Allah will bless them with the choicest rewards. On the other hand. if they pretended to escape duty as they did on the earlier occasion, they would be punished severely. The verse in question reads :

> Say unto those of the wandering Arabs who were left behind : Ye will be called against a folk of mighty prowess, to fight them until they surrender ; and if ye obey, Allah will give you a fair reward ; but if ye turn away as ye did turn away before, He will punish you with a painful doom.[20]

Shāh Waliullah then argues that the words *ye will be called* clearly suggest that the desert Arabs who had not accompanied the Prophet on the occasion of the treaty of Hudaybiyah, were to be called to take up arms against a people who would be offered only two choices, to fight or to surrender (leaving out the third alternative of submitting to the Islamic state on payment of *jizyah).* This situation did arise during the caliphate of the first Caliph Abu Bakr who fought the apostates of Arabia who were required either to fight or to surrender (and re-enter Islam completely). This verse, says the Shāh, did

not refer to Byzantines or the Persians since they had three alternatives—fighting, surrender or payment of *jizyah*—open to them. Therefore, the Shāh concludes, the verse in question clearly alludes to the caliphate of Abu Bakr who despatched expeditions headed by Khālid to fight the apostates and called upon the desert Arabs to join the armed conflict which was solely for the purpose of forcing apostates to abjure their revisionist version of Islam. This was what the verses in question had clearly alluded since the Islamic law of *jihād*, as applied in the war with the Byzantines and Persians, offered three alternative viz. fighting, acceptance of Islam or payment of *jizyah*. These verses thus clearly pointed out the caliphate of Abu Bakr for it was he who decided to despatch an army to fight the apostates and invited the desert Arabs to join in the expedition. Divine reward and punishment can only be the upshot of the acceptance and rejection of a call given by a right-guided caliph.[21]

Other Topics of Izālat al-Khafa

Apart from the defence in regard to the righteousness and seemliness of the first four caliphs and their achievements, the work contains a lot of thought-provoking material not usually found in the books on dialectical theology or other works on history and biography. One of these relates to the exposition of distinctive features of the period of first three caliphs,[22] difference between caliphate and kingship,[23] an elucidation of the autocratic form of government and clarification showing that the Ummayed Caliphate did not fall in the category of autocracy. Shāh Waliullah agrees that the period of right-guided caliphate came to end after Caliph 'Ali was assassinated, but he advises not to indulge in vituperative rhetorics in the case of Caliph Mu'āwiyah.[24] However, for the caliphate of Bani Marwān he says :

> 'When 'Abdul Malik b. Marwān took over the reigns of government, the confusion came to end and coercive caliphate, as predicted by the Prophet (on whom be

peace) in several *ahadith*, came into operation."[25]

Another distinguishing feature of the *Izālat al-Khafa* is that the Shāh has given all the juristic opinions and judgements of Caliph 'Umar which presents a clear picture of the Caliph's judicial thought.[26] This was perhaps the first attempt ever made to bring into relief the juristic endeavours of Caliph 'Umar. No work on the subject existed until Dr. Muhammad Rawwas Qilaji (1401/1981) recently compiled a voluminous *Mausu'ata Fiqh 'Umar b. al-Khattāb* (Encyclopaedia of the jurisprudence of Caliph 'Umar) covering 687 pages of a large format. This book has been published by Maktaba al-Falāh of Kuwait.

The Shāh has paid special attention to enumerate the merits and achievement of the first three caliphs. His treatment of the subject is indicative of his own disposition, which, in fact, was the need of hour in his time. However, he is not in the least ungenerous in describing the virtues and excellences of Caliph 'Ali. His description of the members of Prophet's household, including Caliph 'Ali shows his loving regard for all of them.[27] In his view the martyrdom of Caliph 'Uthman was the first ordeal faced by Islam[28] and the second adversity was that of Husain b. 'Ali. He has cited a *hadith* from *Mishkāt* (which has been taken from *Baihaqi*) predicting that Imām Husain who was like a part of Prophet's body would be slain by the Muslims.[29] He deemed the tragic happenings connected with the expedition of al-Harrah as a continuation of the same scourge which led to the sack of the city of the Prophet.[30] He has severely criticized, where necessary the Ummayed caliphs[31] which goes to make his assessment moderate and balanced, and conforms to the view-point held by the Sunnites.

Woeful Developments following the Prophet's Death.

Another characteristic of this work by the Shāh is that it outlines the intellectual and theological developments along with the religious history of Islam. Innumerable chronological accounts had been written by his time, but none had given a continuous and coordinated description of the intellectual,

educational and moral changes that accompanied the political and cultural developments in Islam. There were certainly works which mentioned such shifts and transformations here and there, but nobody had ever thought of writing anything on this topic. The Shāh has discussed the woeful happenings occurring after the earliest and most excellent period of Islam,[32] differentiated between the doctrinal imperitives of the two periods[33] and described the intrinsic and intellectual permutations resulting with the march of time. He has discussed these matters under the following sub-titles,

(1) Emergence of falsehood, (2) Portentous recitation of the Qur'ān and embellishments in it, (3) Deeming the recitation of the Qur'ān as sufficient and neglecting to ruminate over it, (4) Ratiocination in legal matters and discussion of hypothetical issues, (5) Interpretation of allegorical verses of the Qur'ān and working out novel explanations, (6) Bringing up new issues in regard to creed and Divine essence and attributes, (7) Originating new litanies and recitals for gaining propinquity to God in addition to those taught by the Prophet, (8) Giving equal importance to the commendable acts and obligatory observances, (9) Pronouncing juristic opinions through mutual consultation instead of referring the matter to competent and pious scholars, (10) Birth of new sects like Qadariyah (believers in free-will) and Murjiyah (the procrastinators), (11) Expiration of mutual confidence among Muslims (12) Rise of such rulers who were either not eligible or were mediocres, and (13) Abandonment or indolence in enforcing the Islamic religious observances.[34]

Izālat al-Khafa was first published, under the orders of Munshi Jamāl-ud-din Khan, the Prime Minister of Bhopal in 1286/1869, by Matb'a Siddiqi, Bareilly under the supervision of Muhammad Ahsan Siddiqi who had three manuscripts of the work, one belonging to Munshi Jamāl-ud-din, the other of Ahmad Husain of Amroha and the third obtained from Nurul Hasan of Kandhla, for collation and editing of the copy prin ed by him. It seems the editor was not able to revise the work

later on. Another edition, printed through the offset process of the first edition was brought out by the Suhail Academy of Pakistan, Lahore in 1396/1976.[35] The work was translated into Arabic through the efforts of Al-Majlis al-'Ilmi, Dhabel, which could not somehow arrange for its publicity in the Arab countries. Maulana 'Abdul Shakūr of Lucknow rendered the first five sections of the book (155 pages) into Urdu. Printed in 1329/1911 by the Umdatul Matāb'e Lucknow, under the title of *Kashf al-Ghita's 'an Sunnat al-Bayzā'*, the book consists of 336 pages.

Notes and References

1. *Izālat al-Khafa*, Vol. I, Suhail Academy, Lahore, p. 1.
2. *Al-Yān'e al-Jani*, p. 93 ; *Nuzahtul Khawātir*, Vol. VI.
3. *At-T'alīq al-Mumjadda*, p. 25.
4. A recent work of Imām Khumeini, the leader of great Iranian revolution, entitled *Al-Hukūmat al-Islāmiyah*, attributes abiding vicegerency of God to the Imāms whereby they exercise authority over the entire universe and whatever it contains. Writes Imām Khomeini :

 "It is one of the accepted principles of our religion that the Imāms have a degree of nearness to God which is beyond the reach of any angel or prophet. Our traditions and *ahādith* clearly state that the greatest Prophet and the Imāms were lights before the creation of this universe. Allah allowed these lights to encircle His Throne and granted them such nearness and status as is known to God alone."
5. *Izālat al-Khafā*, Vol. I, p. 1.
6. *Ibid* , Vol. I, p. 1.
7. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 4.
8. *Ibid.*, Vol, II, p. 6.
9. *Al-Giyathi* has since been published by the government of Qatar in 1400/1980 and covers 611 pages of a large format. It has been edited by Dr. 'Abdul 'Azim al-Adib.
10. For the life of this supremely able Prime Minister, Ibn Khallikan and *Tabaqāt as-Shāfi'yah* can be consulted. In Urdu 'Abdur

Razzāq has written his biography entitled Nizām-ul-Mulk Tusi.

11. Q. 4 : 58-59,
12. The book covers 168 pages of a book of average size.
13. See pp. 127-137 of the *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, Vol, II.
14. Ibn Kathīr, Vol. XII, p. 208.
15. *Izālat al-Khafa*, Vol. I, p. 2.
16. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 2-3 (Q. 72 : 2)
17. Q. 24 : 55
18. *Izālat al-Khafa*, Vol. I, pp. 20-23.
19. Q. 47 : 15.
20. Q. 47 : 16
21. The detailed discussion can be seen on pp. 38-39 of the *Izālat al-Khafa*, Vol. I. Shihāb-ud-din Mahmūd al-Alūsī (d. 1270/1854), author of the well-known commentary on the Qur'ān, *Rūh-al-Ma'āni*, agrees with conclusion drawn by Shāh Waliullah (pp. 101-104).
22. *Izalāt al-Khafa*, Vol. I, pp. 121-22.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 126.
24. *Ibid.*, p, 146.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 143. In regard to Yazid, he observes in the *Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha* that "there were two propagators of unrighteousness, Yazid in Syria and Mukhtār in Iraq." (Vol. II, p. 213). He calls Yazīd a hypocrite and unrighteous person (p. 215).
26. *Izālat al-Khafa*, Vol. II, pp. 85-142,
27. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 251-283.
28. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 154.
29. *Ibid*,, Vol. I, p. 154.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 154,
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 154-55.
32. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 122.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
34. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 133.
35. All references have been given from this edition.

IX

Statesmanship of Shah Waliullah during the period of Political Instability

As stated in the second chapter of this work the decline and disintegration of political power in India coinciding with rampant disorder, lawlessness and demoralization during the 12th century of Hijrah (beginning from the closing decades of the seventeenth century A. D.) had sunk the Indian society in its throes of death. The long rule of the Mughals had been reduced to a symbol devoid of any power, capacity or will to restore its lost glory.

Three new dynamic powers were then emerging within the country—Marathas, Sikhs and Jats—which, it seemed, would decide the fate of the country.

Marathas

The Marathas, first confined to Deccan as agitators and terrorists, were trying to promote ethnic and regional nationalism in order to create a power base for themselves. Growing enervation of the central authority and selfishness of the provincial chiefs, very often scheming against one another and utilizing the Marathas for their petty ends, had converted the Marathas into a power which started dreaming of capturing Delhi and taking the place of the Mughals.

By 1170/1756, Malhar Rao Holkar and Raghunath Rao had been emboldened to lay hands on the northern India.[1] In the year 1164/1751 Safdar Jang, the Nawab of Oudh with the sanction of the young emperor, Ahmad Shāh, and heedless of

the danger of drawing the Marathas into disputes in the very heart of the empire, called in Malhar Rāo Holkar from Mālwa, Jayappa Sindia from Nārnaūl, and Sūraj Mal Jāt, to help him against the Bangash Afghans who had invaded Oudh. Najīb-ud-daula was forced to make a pact with the Marathas, Raghunath Rao marched northwards in Sha'aban 1171/April 1757. The Punjab from the Chenab to the areas as far south as the confluence of the Indus and the Panchnad which had been the gateway of India and had never been captured earlier by any non-Muslim potentate, fell into the hands of Marathas. Adīna Beg Khān, who had served many masters and betrayed all, was appointed governor on promising to pay a huge tribute. After the death of Adīna Beg Khān, Jānkoji Sindia appo nted Sabaji Bhonsle as the governor of Punjab.

Safdar Jang's folly had enabled Marathas to plunder the neighbouring regions around Delhi lying between the Ganges and Jamuna. Dātāji Sindia now coming from Deccan in 1171/ 1757 sought to conquer the whole of Hindustan. He advanced towards Bundelkhand and Oudh. He besieged Najīb-ud-daula at Shukartar near Saharanpur, throughout the rainy season of 1193/1779 while another force under Govind Pant Bundele crossed the Ram Ganga and devastated northern Rohilkhand including Amroha, not far away from Delhi.

Sadāshiv Rāo, known as Bhāo, entered Delhi on 9th Dhil Hijjah 1173/24th June 1760 and forced Y'aqub 'Ali to hand over the charge of the Red Fort to him. Shankar Rāo was appointed as the new caretaker of the Fort who stripped off the gold and silver from the ceiling of the great hall of audience for being melted in the mint. He also defaced the tombs and shrines for the sake of rich ornaments and plundered the Qadam Sharīf and the mausoleum of Khwāja Nizām-ud-din Aulia. On 29th Safar, 1174/10th October, 1760 Sadāshiv Bhāo deposed and imprisoned Shāh Jahān III and enthroned Mirza Jawān Bakht, son of Shāh 'Ālam 'Ali Gauhar as the puppet emperor. Bhāo himself wanted to be crowned as the emperor of India but he was dissuaded by his advisors since they thought that the replacement of a Mughal

emperor would create disorder in the country. This was the time when the whole country from the Attock and Himalayas to the extreme limit of the Peninsula was forced to acknowledge the sway of the Maratha confederacy and those tracts not directly administered by them paid them tribute, while their numerous chiefs owed allegience to one man, the Peshwa. The Marathas then had with them a corps of 10,000 sepoys, trained under Bussy on the French model. In the battle of Pānīpat (1761) the Maratha army consisted of 55,000 cavalry, 15,000 infantry and 200 pieces of cannons. Pindaris and Rajputs, as camp-followers of the Marathas, had swelled their strength to a force of three hundred thousand. However, "the Marathas lacked an imperial spirit," writes Vincent A. Smith, "because they were nurtured in defiance rather than imperial ambition and rose to greatness through guerilla tactics rather than regular warfare. These tactics imply inferiority and the Marathas never quite got over this feeling that they were temporary freebooters who must take what they could while they could"[2] Another historian H G. Rowlinson says: "Their *mulkgīri* raids, by destroying the industries and wealth of the countries overrun, merely 'killed the goose which laid the golden eggs.' The Maratha State was a *Krieg Staat*, pure and simple: and it is the fate of the *Krieg Staat*, as Sarkar justly observes, to defeat its own ends. The severity of the Maratha raids, for the collection of *chauth* and other arrears; varied of course, in intensity.[3]" They possessed a Hindu revivalist spirit which had made them impatient and unsuitable for any constructive work for the common weal. But the sympathy which the religious aspect of the Maratha State might have drawn from the Hindus was dissipated by the aspect of plunder which was applied as ruthlessly to Hindus as to Muslims. The instinct to plunder was the internal defect: cutting of noses and ears was the common occurance during plundering raids and no woman was safe from their outrageous behaviour. The high-handed conduct of Sindia and Holkar offended the Rajputs who held aloof from them. Support of the Jāts of Bhartapūr under their leader Suraj Mal had been secured,

but he left in disgust at the arrogance of Bhāo.[4] Jadu Nath Sarkar has cited in his *Fall of the Mughal Empire* an elegy by a Bengali poet Ganga Ram lamenting over the cruelty and despotism of Maratha rulers.

Portuguese travellers like Pissurlen have expressed horror att the inhuman treatment of their subjects by the Marathas. Such was their heartless exploitation of the subject people that a historian, Ghulam 'Ali Āzād Bilgrāmi says, "The only object they had in view was to plunder everything, leaving practically nothing for the sustenance of the people. They exacted *chauth* from the distant dominions of the decaying Mughal Empire, which were usually the target of their depradations."[5]

Plundering raids by the Marathas were simply meant for attaining power and riches, but Hindu revivalism was also a part of their military campaigns. Mountstuart Elphinstone writes in the *History of India* about Shivaji, the first Maratha chief :

> "He had been brought up in a strong Hindu feeling..... and out of this sprang up a rooted hatred to the Musalmans and increasing attachment to his own superstitions. This inclination fell so well in with his policy, that he began to affect peculiar piety, and to lay claim to prophetic dreams and other manifestations of the favour of gods."[6]

Just before the decisive battle of Pānīpat, the state of things in the Maratha camp had become indescribable. Grief and terror prevailed everywhere. At this critical hour Shujā'-ud-daula, who had earlier been inclined towards the Marathas, received a last despairing letter from Bhāo Sahib for arranging a treaty of peace with Abdāli. Shujā'-ud-daula who had had enough of experience of the Marathas bleeding the conquered territories with their insatiable demands, wrote back to Bhāo Sahib which throws ample light on the effects of Maratha rule during the short period of their ascendancy. He said in his reply :

"The Brahmins of Deccan have achieved a dominant

position over Hindustan for sometime past It is their cupidity and rapacious nature and perfidy and unfaithfulness that has brought the scourge of Shāh Abdāli on us. What treaty of peace is possible with the people who are insensible to the honour and prosperity of others: who deem all goods and chattles belonging to them and their own people. All the peoples have at last been so disgusted with them that they have begged Shāh Abdāli to come from *vilayat*,[7] for they considered that the losses they would have to suffer from his invasion would be preferable than that they were undergoing at the hands of Marathas,"[8]

On January 24, 1761/6th Jamādi-ul- Ākhir, 1174 the combined forces of Ahmad Shāh Abdāli, the Rohilas of Nawab Najīb-ud-daula and the army of Shuja-ud-daula defeated the Maratha confedracy. "Never was a defeat more complete", says Elphinstone, "and never was there a calamity that diffused so much consternation," Most disastrous of all, perhaps, was the fact that it dealt a crushing blow to the emerging power of Marathas. The reasons for the invasion of Ahmad Shāh Abdāli and the effects of this decisive battle will be described later in connexion with role played by Shāh Waliullah at this critical juncture of Indian history.

Sikhs

The Sikh sect which Gurū Bābā Nānak (874-941/1649-1534) had founded aimed at spiritual liberation by means of self-restraint, moral rectitude, searching of the heart and fixed gaze on the One God—"The True, the Immortal, the self-Existant. the Invisible, the Pure" *(alakh niranjan)*. According to the *Sayr-ul-Mutākherīn*, Bābā Nanak received education of Persian from a sufi Shaikh Syed Hasan[9]. The third Gurū Amar Dās introduced many innovations to reform the Hindu society of its social evils which aroused the hostility of the Brahmins.[10] He encouraged inter-caste alliances, remarriage of

widows and forbade the practice of Sati. Empe or Akbar paid a visit to Gurū Amar Dās and was so impressed with his way of life that he assigned the revenues of several villages to the Gurū's daughter, Bhāni, as a marriage gift. The fourth Gurū Rām Dās (941-989/1534-1581) had a tank dug at the site granted to his wife by Emperor Akbar, where he founded a town destined to become the religious capital of the Sikhs.

In 970/1563 Gurū Arjun succeeded his father as the fifth Guru of the Sikhs. In August 1013/1604 he completed the compilation of *Granth Sāhib*, an anthology of the 'sacred' writings of the former gurūs. In the last year of his life he made the mistake of blessing the banners of Khus au, the rival of Jahāngīr for the Mughal th one, and even gave him financial help. On the defeat of the rebel, Jahāngīr fined the Gurū two lakhs of rupees for his collusion with treason. The Gurū was taken to Lahore where he refused to pay anything and was sentenced to death, an usual punishment for refusal to pay the fine in those days.[11]

The execution of Gurū Arjun had a profound impact on the next Gurū Hargobind. He trāined a body of soldiers and spent much time in martial exercises and hunting. He also built a fortress, Lohgarh, in Amritsar. He ordered that at the *Akāl Takht* (the throne of Timeless God) the congregation should chant ballads extolling feats of heroism, and instead of listening to religious discourses plans of military conquests should be discussed. As the number of Gurū's retainers increased, who sometimes went on plundering raids, the local officials began sending reports to the Emperor. Jahāngir ordered the arrest of Hargobind and his detention in the Gwalior fort. He was released after a year or more of imprisonment, but he again resumed his martial activity, only a little more discreetly, and succeeded in raising his private army. He next provoked war with Shāh Jahān by encroaching on the Emperor's game preserve and attacking the servants of the imperial hunt. Pursued by the royal army, he was forced to seek refuge in Kirartpur, in the Kashmir hills, where he died in 1054/1644.

Then followed the peaceful pontificate of Gurū Har Rai (1054-72/1644-61), a disputed succession between his two sons, and early death of the infant heir Gurū Har Kishan (1066-75/1656-64) After a time Gurū Tegh Bahādur, the youngest son of Hargobind succeeded in being recognised as Gurū by the Sikh community. "Tegh Bahādur undertook an extensive tour of the Punjab" says Khushwant Singh, "Wherever he went he attracted great crowds and was given handsome donations by his admirers. His exhortation to the people to stand firm could not have been platable to the government. He was summoned to Delhi. Mughal officers who carried the summons to Anandpur reported him missing. He was declared an absconder and a warrant was issued for his arrest. He was apprehended along with a band of devotees, at Agra, brought to Delhi, and arraigned before the Kazi's court" Tegh Bahādur was sentenced to death and executed on 19th Ramadhān 1086/November 11, 1675 when Aurangzib was away to Hasan Abdāl disciplining the recalcitrant frontier tribesmen on the north-west. Gurū Gobind Singh succeeded his father and tried to organise the Punjab peasantry against the excesses of local officials, Rājas and zamindārs of the Punjab hills. His private army even included five hundred Pathans.[12] Soon he came into conflict with the Rajas of Kalhur, Bilāspūr, Jiswāl etc. The Rajas on being defeated by the Gurū appealed to the Emperor for help. Aurangzīb sent his son Mo'azzam and General Mirza Beg to the Punjab for restoration of law and order and collection of arrears of revenue. A Sikh chroniclar Gur Bilās maintains that General Mirza Beg had secret instructions from the Emperor not to bother Gurū Gobind Singh who was left unmolested and was able to turn his unbounded energy to reorganising the community. It is also stated that when Aurangzīb was nearing his death he summoned Gurū Gobind Singh promising him good treatment. However, Aurangzīb died in 1707, when the Gurū was on his way to meet the Emperor. "Guru Gobind Singh's letter to the Emperor (i. e. *Zafarnāma*) reveals," according to Gurmit Singh, "that the Guru

had all the admiration for the personal qualities of the Emperor and his opposition to Aurangzīb was certainly not based on any personal consideration, or inspired by any sense of wrong done to him or his family and he had no ill-feeling against Aurangzib."[13] Prince Mo'azzam, who ascended the throne after Aurangzīb, as Bahādur Shāh I, welcomed the help rendered by the Gurū in sending a detachment of Sikh horsemen in the battle of Jajau. Gurū Gobind Singh was awarded a jewelled scarf and presents worth Rs. 60,000. Bahādur Shāh turned towards Deccan to suppress the rebellion of his brother Kām Baksh Gurū Gobind Singh and his band also went south with the Emperor. However two young Pathans, servants of the Gurū, assassinated him on 10th Sh'aban, 1222/7th October, 1807.

Gurū Gobind Singh was the tenth and final Gurū of the Sikhs. Before his death he had commissioned one Lachman Dās—later known as Bandā Bairāgi--for urging Sikhs to volunteer for military service. A Kashmiri by origin, he had spent fifteen years or more of his life in a hermitage on the banks of Godavari. Bandā left Deccan and came northwards at the time Bahādur Shāh was still involved fighting his own brother in Deccan and Rajputs were in open revolt. "Banda opened the flood-gates to a sea of pent-up hatred, and all he could do was to ride on the crest of the wave of violence that he had let loose,[14]" writes Khushwant Singh. As Sir Jadu Nath Sarkar says, "He routed the commandant of Sonpat, and soon gathered 40,000 armed men around him, sacked the town of Sadhaura (twenty-six miles east of Ambala), killing many of the people and gained his crowning victory by defeating and slaying Vazīr Khān the commandant of Sirhind (22 May 1710), and plundered his entire camp. The town of Sirhind itself was taken and pillaged for four days with ruthless cruelty ; the mosques were defiled, the houses burnt, the women outraged and the Muslims slaughtered."[15] The crisis drew Bahādur Shāh to the Punjab. Before this, some imperial forces had fought Bandā and cleared the road from Sonpat to Sirhind. At the approach of the Emperor, Bandā

evacuated Sadhura and took post in the fort of Lohgarh and then fled to the hills of Jammu. On the death of Bahādur Shāh (26th Rabi ul-Awwal 1124/27th Feb. 1712), Bandā took advantage of the war of succession. He consolidated his power once again and started ravaging the northern Punjab plains. During the reign of Farrukh Siyar, Bandā Bahādur was forced to surrender after a bitter fighting and prolonged seige and executed at Delhi on 2nd Rabi II, 1128/15th March 1716. Bandā Bahādur's atrocities used to drive the population into wholesale flight from the raided territories. He was even considered as an imposter by a section of the Sikhs since he styled himself as the resurrected Gurū Gobind and introduced certain innovations into the Sikh creed and practice. During his short-lived success, however, he roused the Sikhs to take up arms for carving out a kingdom for themselves.

The ultimate aim of Sikhism was to reform Hinduism and there is hardly any doubt that Gurū Nānak had been deeply impressed by the teachings of Islam. The concept of *Tauhid*, the Oneness of God, equality of all human beings and rejection of idol worship were taken from Islam.[16]

Sikh religious writings, particularly *Adi Granth*, are full of *Sufi* metaphor.[17]

Sikhism was, undoubtedly, one of the most potent reformative movements born in India and it would have probably played a revolutionary role in reforming Hinduism if it had retained its original creed and not merged into the Hindu society. Had it developed a personality of its own, having faith in unalloyed unicity of God and equality of mankind, it would have been nearer to Islam, but the unfortunate confrontation with the then political powers, which are always insensitive to moral and spiritual consequences of the action taken by them, widened the gulf not only between the Sikhs and Muslim rulers but also with the Muslim masses. It made them a militant sect—one amongst serveral others destabilizing the country during the 12th A. H./ 18th century A. D. The wanton destruction of life and property by Bandā Bahādur and the humiliation suffered by Muslims in

their religious observances and the desecration of mosques and mausoleums[18] during the reign of Mahārāja Ranjīt Singh alienated the sympathies of Muslims who began to look upon the Khālsa as the enemies of Islam.

This was the situation obtaining in India when in the middle of thirteenth century A. H. (the beginning of nineteenth century A. D.) Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd (d. 1246/1830) and Ismāil Shahid (d. 1246/1830), both brought up by Shāh Waliullah's school of thought and both disciples of the Shāh's eldest son Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, had to unfurl the banner of *Jihād* against the military oligarchy of Maharāja Ranjīt Singh which really aimed at getting rid of the increasing foreign domination over India. Another objective of this *Jihād* movement was revivification of the Indian Muslim society.[19]

Jāts

Jāts were not a religious sect like the Sikhs but an ethnic group. Towards the downfall of Mughal empire the Jāt peasantry of the region around Bharatpur (west of Agra) got itself organised into a predatory power, hovering about with contending parties and plundering both sides whenever an opportunity was afforded for it. They never intended to form any stable administration, their chief aim being to fish in troubled waters and grab as much wealth as possible.

Prof. Khalīq Ahmad Nizāmi writes in his introduction to the *Shāh Waliullah Ke Siyāsi Maktūbāt* (political letters of Shāh Waliullah).

> "The region south of Jamuna from Agra to Delhi was populated by the Jāts and their eastern limit was the valley of Chanbal. Their depradations were a constant nuisance for the central government and, as Sarkar says, no administration could brook this thorn planted on the Delhi-Agra road. Elaborate precautions had to be taken in the movement of goods and troops on this road which led the way to Deccan via Ajmer.

"*Dastūr-al-Inshā* (by Yār Muhammad) shows how unsafe this pathway had become during the reign of Bahādur Shāh. The Dutch who passed through this region in 1712 have mentioned these conditions. John Surman who happened to travel on this road in June 1715, speaks of marauding activities of the Jāts. Earlier, during the reign of Shāh Jahān, the Jāts had raised a tumult when the commander of Mathura, Murshid Quli Khān, died fighting them in 1047/1637."[20]

Sir Jadu Nath Sirkar writes: "In 1685, these people raised their heads under two new leaders, Rāja Rām and Rām Chehra, the petty chiefs of Sinsani and Soghor, who were the first to train their clansmen in group organisation and open warfare.....Then they began to raid the King's highway and carry their depredations even to the gates of Agra"[21]..... . "Shortly afterwards, he (Rāja Rām) looted Akbar's tomb at Sikandra, doing great damage to the building and, according to one account digging out and burning that great emperor's bones."[22] "The next rising of the Jāts was under Churāman, a nephew of Rāja Rām. He robbed many a ministers of the (Mughal) court on the road and attacked the royal wardrobe and the revenues sent from the provinces."[23]

"A contemporary historian Har Charan Dās writes in the *Chahār Gulzār-i-Shujā'i* that when the Jāts started plundering old Delhi, the inhabitants of city were rendered homeless, who wandered aimlessly in all the directions like a broken ship tossed by angry waves of the ocean. Everybody appeared to have become a lunatic with shock and grief."[24]

Recounting the events of 1179/1765 Zakā Ullah writes in the *Tārikh Hindustān*:

"The Agra fort was commandeered by the Jāts who ruled over the territories 100 miles east to Delhi. Rājā

Sūraj Mal had a genius for organisation and using opportunities. He drove away the Maratha commander of Agra and seized the territory of Mewat. He built four strong forts and started making such demands from Delhi that were sure to terminate the Delhi sultanate. Najīb-ud-daula defeated the Jāts with the help of Balauchs and Sūraj Mal was killed near Delhi. A war of succession broke out after the death of Sūraj Mal. Two of his sons were killed and the third, Ranjīt Singh, succeeded his father as the Rājā. The Jāts become very powerful during his reign, his state extending from south-east of Alwar to north-east of Agra. His annual revenues amounted to rupees two crores and his army consisted of sixty thousand troops."[25]

Conditions in Delhi

Plunder of Delhi, without any administration worthy of the name, had become a routine by the Maratha, Sikh and Jāt hordes. The city lay prostrate and bleeding and its citizens, who were respected not because they were the denizens of the capital but also because of their culture and learning, had become an easy prey for these plunderers. The letters written by the scholars and mystic *shaikhs* of the time (who were normally detached from all worldliness and endeavouring for spiritual perfection) to their friends and disciples reflect the disorder and uncertainty prevailing in Delhi in those days. Mirza Mazhar Jān-i-Jānān (1111-95/1699-1781) the well-known *Sheikh* of the Naqshbandiyah-Mujaddidyah order and a contemporary of Shāh Waliullah writes in one of his letters :

"I am tired of the turmoils and unrest in Delhi occurring day after day."[26]

In another letter he says :

"Disturbances bend their steps to Delhi from all sides."[27]

In yet another letter he speaks of the disorder prevailing in the capital and the agony of its inhabitants.

"How can I describe the distress of the people caused by the prevalent affliction and chaos. God may save us from the divine wrath afflicting this city. There is no semblance of administration left in the government "[28]

Nādir Shāh's Sack of Delhi

Shāh Waliullah returned from Hijaz in 1145/1733. A few years later in 1151/1739, Nādir Shāh attacked Delhi which left the Mughal empire stupefied with the blow which had fallen on it. A great part of Delhi lay in ruins and the stench of the dead was intolerable after the sack of the city by Nādir Shāh. The gentry of the city was so dismayed that many of them decided to commit *jauhar*[29] after the custom of the Rajputs Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz says that on that occasion his father reminded the people of the tragic happenings of Karbala and the sufferings undergone by Husain, in order to dissuade them from committing suicide and killing their kith and kin. His advice was accepted by the people who refrained from committing that grievous sin.

Equanimity of Shāh Waliullah

Delhi was almost continuously being ravaged by the Marathas, Jāts, Sikhs and invaders like Nādir Shāh. Shāh Waliullah had often to leave Delhi during these tumults. In 1173/1760, the Shāh left Delhi with his family for Budhāna on the request of his attendants. As mentioned in the *Al Qaul-al-Jali*, he remained secluded for forty days during Ramadhān[30] and continued to teach and guide his disciples with complete peace of mind as if everything was normal not in Delhi alone but all over the country. He kept himself engaged in literary pursuits and religious reform unmindful of his surroundings. Syed Sulaimān Nadwi has hinted at serenity of the Shāh in his own inimitable style.

"Extremely few writers have been there whose compositions are free from the influences exerted in their age, or transcend the time and space, or, at least, show no

concern to the intellectual torpor common among their compatriots. The Shah's writings, however, leave his times and circumstances in the shade and completely ignore personal reactions to the inconveniences faced by him. The reader never feels that he wrote them at a time when law and order had completely broken down in the country, chaotic conditions prevailed every where and Delhi, having lost its position as the centre of a great empire, was the scene of intrigues and conspiracy where every soldier of fortune was dreaming of establishing his own kingdom, Sikhs, Marathas, Jāts and Rohilas had become rebellions on the one hand, and adventurers like Nādir Shāh and Ahmad Shāh were invading the country every now and then. Delhi was sacked several times during this period, but the Shāh, who was a witness to all these happenings, never spoke of them nor there is any trace of any anxiety or sorrow, he would have naturally felt, in his writings. It seems as if he occupied some celestial sphere far away from terrestrial incidents and occurances. His compositions bear testimony to the patience and composure of a real man of learning: Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.[31]

Cultivation of knowledge in the true sense is but another form of the recollection of God. No wonder, therefore, if it produces serenity of mind and tranquillity in heart. Anyone going through thousands of pages written by the Shāh would hardly come across anything alluding to the tumultuous situation obtaining in the twelfth century when everything was disturbed by chaos and turmoil. He would feel immersed in a river of knowledge flowing placidly, undisturbed by the commotion around it produced by the march of events."[32]

Statesmanship of the Shāh

The Shāh role as a literati was, however, not confined merely to teaching and writing scholarly dissertations unperturbed by the anarchy and chaos closing in on him from all sides. He was quietly endeavouring to re-establish Muslim rule in the country, restore peace and order, suppress all contumacious forces and to streamline the administration in a way to enable Muslims to organise their social life in accordance with the *sharī'ah*. His efforts in this direction could be compared to that of any statesman who are normally unconcerned with intellectual pursuits.

Among those who have devoted their lives to the reform and revivification of Islam only Ibn Taimiyah can be compared with the Shāh who urged the Syrian Muslims in 700/1301 to stand up against the Mongols. When Sultān Muhammad b. Qalāwon of Egypt procrastinated in fighting the Mongols, causing discontent and frustration among the Syrians, he went to Egypt and exhorted him to take up arms for the defence of Syria. He even fought the Mongols along with the Sultān's troops and inflicted a humiliating defeat upon the Mongols [33]

The Shāh also showed a similar insight and gave proof of his statesmanship. Had the Mughals and their nobles possessed some courage and prudence, India would have got rid of its short-sighted and disruptive elements and even preserved its independence against the British, who entrenched themselves firmly during the nineteenth century owing to internal strife and absence of any central power, and subsequently became a world power by gaining control first over India and then the entire Arab and Muslim world.

The courage and ambition of the Shāh coupled with his composure and self-possession during the days when the conditions within the country were completely unsettled or rather explosive, reminds one of a couplet of Iqbāl in which he says :

> Stormy though the wind, he keeps his lamp alight
> The friar who has kingly miens.

Anxiety of the Shāh

The Shāh had seen, during his adolescence, the grandeur and majesty of Aurangzīb's rule. He would have also heard of pomp and splendour of the Mughal Empire from his elders. He was also aware of the glorious period of Islamic history for we find the duties and responsibilities of an Islamic state set forth by him in the *Izālat al-Khafa*, which, he believed, were necessary for divine succour. He was also a witness to the downfall of the Mughal Empire, the disorder prevailing during the times of Farrukh Siyar and Muhammad Shāh when no semblance of law and order was left and no security was there for any one's life and property. The Muslims were being humiljated and their religious practices were either ridiculed or interdicted. Although the Muslims had ruled over the country for the last six hundred years, they were feeling completely powerless at the moment. This dark and dreary situation made the Shāh shed tears of blood whose stains are found in the letters he wrote to his friends and grandees. We are giving here a few examples of it. One of it, written to some monarch[34] describes the discriminatory treatment against Islam by the Jāt chief Sūraj Mal.

> "Thereafter Sūraj Mal became powerful. The territory beyond two *Kos* from Delhi to Agra in length and from Mewāt to Fīrozābād and Shikohābād in breadth, is ruled by Sūraj Mal and nobody dares offer congregational prayer or give a call to prayer in this area."[35]

In the same letter he gives an account of the desolation of Bayānah which had earlier been a flourishing town and a well-known seat of learning.

> "The town of Bayānah an old cultural centre of Islam, inhabited by numerous scholars and mystics during the last seven hundred years was forcibly occupied and all the Muslims were driven away from it."[36]

The destitution of over a hundred thousand employees of the royal court is mentioned by him in another letter.

> "When the royal treasury became empty, there was nothing

to be paid to the employees. Scattered in different directions, these people had to fall back on beggary. Nothing was left except the empire in name only."[37]

About the condition of Indian Muslims, he wrote.

"All in all, the condition of Muslims is simply pitiable."[38]

In a letter addressed to Nawāb Najīb-ud-daula, the Shāh wrote;

"The Muslims of India whether they belong to Delhi or any other place, have had to face several afflictions and been ravaged many times. That the knife is now at the bones is a crying shame!"[39]

The condition then obtaining in India led the Shāh to predict about the future.

"If the forces inimical to Islam are, God forbid, able to perpetuate their domination, the Muslims will consign Islam to oblivion and it would not be long when they will be turned into a people incapable of distinguishing Islam from un-Islam."[40]

Advice to Mughal Kings and Grandees

Shāh Waliullah had assiduously studied the causes of the rise and downfall of Mughal empire (which have been discussed in connexion with the *Hujjat Allāh-al-Bāligha* in the seventh chapter). He had applied his mind to the history of other Muslim kingdoms and derived conclusions in regard to philosophy of history. He was helped in the task by his thorough knowledge of the Qurān and the 'way' of God repeatedly referred to in it. He had reached the conclusion that the Mughal's hereditary form of succession to the empire extending over a long period of time, excessive fun and frolic indulged in by the rulers, self-centered courtiers and short-sighted advisers had made the empire weak and infirm. He agreed with the well-known verdict of the Arab philosopher-historian Ibn Khaldūn that when any state enters in its declining years, it is (generally) not possible for it to regain its vigour again.

But a well-meaning concern and a sincere longing for

common weal makes one try his luck even in conditions when there is hardly any hope of success. Nevertheless, there was no reason to lose one's heart. A family which had ruled over the country for several hundred years could be expected to produce a man of courage and ambition who was able to turn the tide and give a new life to the dying empire. The Shāh had studied the Qur'ān in depth and he had this verse of the scripture in his view :

> Thou causest the night to pass into the day, and Thou causest the day to pass into the night. And Thou bringest forth the living from the dead, and Thou bringest forth the dead from the living. And Thou givest sustenance to whom Thou choosest without stint.[41]

The Shāh very well knew the state of affairs in the Red Fort, still he considered it his duty to write a letter to then Mughal King in which he advised the latter to reform the system of government for imparting it a renewed strength. His letter shows his insight into history and polity besides his deep knowledge of religious sciences. In the very beginning of his letter he makes an appeal to the King :

> "I hope from the grace of God that if you act on my advice, the affairs of the state would be set right and it would be able to preserve itself and enhance its prestige As a poet says :
> I am like a parrot behind a looking glass,
> I utter only what the Ever-Abiding tells me to say."[42]

This letter which was addressed jointly to the King, his ministers and courtiers, contained some valuable suggestions in regard to political and administrative measures for the welfare of the people and regaining their confidence. The Shāh had thereafter advised that only such persons should be appointed Qazis and *Muhtasibs* (Censors of public morals) whose conduct had been beyond reproach and they should belong to the *ahl-sunnah* school. He also suggested that the *imāms* of the mosques should be handsomely paid, all should be required to join the congrega-

tional prayers and the sanctity of *Ramadhān* should not be violated. He also wrote that the King and his grandees should give up their bouts of pleasure, should repent on their past sins and avoid them in future. He concluded the letter with the words that if his suggestions were acted upon, they would be succoured by God.[43]

The Shāh had thus absolved himself of the duty of sounding the alarm about the impending danger hovering over the ruling circles and the people alike. This was what he was required to do as a religious leader, a commentator of the Qur'ān and *hadīth* and a renovator of his time. The Shāh, like his predecessors, never accepted any favour from any king and led a simple and frugal life. Yet, like Khwāja Nizām-ud-dīn Aulia and Syed Nasīr-ud-dīn Chirāgh Dehli he was always solicitous of the well being of the kingdom and never weary of advising or writing letters to those among the ruling circle who came into contact with him. Sometimes the King paid a visit to the Shāh and requested him to pray for his welfare. In one of his letters to Shāh Muhammad 'Ashiq of Phulat who was his cousin as well as a disciple, the Shāh wrote :

> "The King[44] went to pay a visit to the shrine of Hazrat Nizām-ud-din Aulia and other saints on Thursday. He came to see me, without any previous intimation, from the side of the Kābuli Darwāza, and came to the mosque where I was present at the time. Honour of the King being incumbent on me, I left one side of my prayer-mat for the King. He sat on one side of it while I was on the other side. He shook hands with me and said that he wanted to see me for a long time. Pointing to a young man, he said that he had led him to me. Then calling attention of his minister he said that the dominance of the disbelievers and discord among the people had reached the stage that he found no pleasure in eating or drinking or enjoying a sound sleep. He asked me to pray for him. I replied that I had already been

praying for him and would now, God-willing, do it even more.

"In the meantime the minister told me that the King was very particular about the five daily prayers. I thanked God and said that it was something I have heard after a long time since his predecessors were not reported to be punctual in prayers."[45]

The Shāh told the King about the advice tendered by Caliph Abu Bakr to Caliph 'Umar at the time he nominated 'Umar as his successor.

"The Caliph is often confronted with perplexing difficulties, both from the side of the enemies as well as from the friends. There is only one solution to all these problems and that is to take the command of God as one's criterion and seek His help to the exclusion of everything else."[46]

In another letter to Shaikh Muhammad 'Ashiq, the Shāh wrote :

"The King[47] and his mother came to see me. Arrangement was made for the privacy of the lady within the mosque. The King's intention was to spend some time with me. He remained there for three or four hours, took the meal with me and mostly talked about the ways of eliciting people's cooperation for public weal."[48]

This was, however, the time when the over-extended decay of the hereditary kingship, external threats and internal intrigues had so enfeebled the Mughal empire that even a dauntless and resolute man would have found it extremely difficult to bring the decadence to a hault by infusing a new life in the administration. History is a witness to the fact that internal machinations, particularly at a time when degeneration of any kingdom has percolated to its depth, render the efforts of the most resolute potentate fruitless. It has happened several times that the last king of any dynasty was a better man than his predecessors. He often made prodigious efforts to save the kingdom but failed.

Marwān Ibn Muhammad known as Marwān al-Himar (d.132/750) of the mayyed dynasty, Must'asim Billah (d.656/1258) the last Caliph of the 'Abbāsids and, to an extent, the last Mughal Emperor Bahādur Shāh Zafar (d. 1279/1862) are but a few examples of such monarchs.

It was, therefore, necessary for a farsighted and sagacious man like Shāh Waliullah not to limit his endeavours to contact only the king and his courtiers for fighting the disruptive forces and arousing the consciousness of local population, but also to get in touch with other nobles and military leaders outside Delhi who possessed the courage and ambition to change the existing state of affairs. Some of those whom the Shāh approached for the purpose were the prime minister Āsaf Jāh,[49] Nawāb Fīroz Jang Nizām ul-mulk Ahmad Shāhi,[50] 'Imād-ul-Mulk Tāj Muhammad Khan Biloch, Nawāb Mujd-ud-daula Bahādur,[51] Nawab 'Ubaid Ullāh Khān Kāshmīri, Miān Niāz Gul Khān and Syed Ahmad Rohila. But the two who were specially chosen for the task by Shāh Waliullah were Amir-ul-Umara Nawāb Najīb-ud-daula within India, and Ahmad Shāh Abdāli, the King of Afg'hanistan, outside the country.

Nawab Najib-ud-daula

Nawāb Najīb-ud daula[52] possessed all those qualities of head and heart which were required of the founders of kingdoms in the past when the courage and valour of any individual was enough to win the allegiance of the people. Najīb-ud daula was trustworthy and loyal to the Mughal rulers, kind and gracious to his subordinates and a brave and talented military leader. These qualities could have helped him to defeat his foes in the battle-field but unfortunately they were of little benefit to him in the prevailing atmosphere of court intrigues and machinations. Sir Jadu Nath Sarkar expresses wonder at his sterling qualities as a capable general in the battlefield who formed a correct estimate in the case of difficulties and was able to take a correct decision in a confusing situation.[53] Another historian Zakā Ullah writes in the *Tārikh-i-Hindustān*:

"Few nobles could be compared to Najīb-ūd daula in the wisdom and sagacity he possessed. He was the last word in trustworthiness and fidelity. He always remained faithful to his old masters Dūnde Khān Rohila and Nawāb Shuj'a-ud-daula. He also maintained good relations with Malhar Rāo Holkar who had fled from the battle of Panipat. In short, he was the man responsible for preserving what had been left of that disintegrating empire.[54]"

Shāh Abdul 'Azīz, the son of Shāh Waliullah writes in his *Malfūzāt* that "Najīb-ud-daula supported nine hundred scholars, of whom the lowest in rank got rupees five and the highest rupees five hundred."[55]

Prof. Khalīq Ahmad Nizāmi considers Najīb-ud-daula as the "most important personality between 1761 to 1770 when the politics of Delhi revolved around him and he shouldered the responsibility of the entire administration."[56]

As a realist and a great judge of human character, the Shāh had the knack to select the right person for every job. This is a quality endowed to all those reformers and revolutionaries who are destined to renovate and revivify the society. In those days of decay when there was no dearth of adventurers, the Shāh selected Najīb-ud-daula, for he saw the spirit and warmth for religion in the latter. The Shāh started writing letters to him in order to arouse his dormant passion for the defence of his faith. In one of his letters to Najīb-ud-daula, the Shāh wrote :

"The Lord of Glory may bless the leader of those who are fighting for religion with a conspicuous victory and discernible Divine succour, and make it a means for showering His choicest rewards and bounties.

"Let it be known after greetings that prayers are being offered here for the victory of the Muslims and there seem to be indications that these supplications have been heard. It is hoped that God will renew *jihād* through you and bestow His favours on you in this world and the world to come."[57]

In another letter Najīb-ud-daula is addressed by the Shāh as 'Commander of the fighters for God."[58]

In yet another letter to him the Shāh wrote:

> "It seems that the task of helping the *millat* in these times will be accomplished through you which is the main-spring of all the meritorious acts. You should not allow any suspicion or doubt to make its way into your heart. God willing, everything will be achieved as desired by your well-wishers."[59]

The Shāh did not merely convey his good-wishes to Najīb-ud-daula in his letters, he often made useful suggestions or invited his attention towards mistakes committed by earlier Muslims so that these were not repeated since, in his view, such mistakes withheld the succour of God. In one of his letters to him, he wrote:

> "When the imperial army passes through Delhi, care should be taken to ensure that the city should not be ravaged as it has happened on previous occasions. The citizens of Delhi have several times undergone the humiliation of plundering and degradation. This was the reason for their failure for the lament of the wronged is also efficacious. If you want to succeed on this occasion and accomplish the tasks remaining incomplete, then you have to give strict orders and ensure their compliance that no soldier interferes with the Muslims of Delhi or the non-Muslims who enjoy the status of *zimmīs* (protected citizens)."[60]

In his several letters to Najīb-ud-daula, the Shāh drew his attention to the disruptive forces (mentioned in the beginning of this chapter) whose suppression was necessary for bringing normalcy and protection of Muslims and their religious institutions. He repeatedly told Najīb ud-daula about the causes creating insurrectionary conditions in the country.[61]

The Shāh had, it seems, pinned all his hopes in Najīb-ud-daula for he insisted that he should always inform him before taking to field of battle so that he might engage himself in prayers

for his victory.[62] The Shāh also emboldened Najīb-ud-daula of his victory in several letters. In one of these he wrote: "This mendicant has absolutely no doubt about it."[63]

The Shāh urged Najīb-ud-daula to write letters to Ahmad Shāh Abdāli in addition to his own epistles to him for coming to the rescue of Indian Muslims. Najīb-ud-daula died eight years after the death of Shāh Waliullah in Rajab 1184 A. H. /31 October, 1770. How deeply Najīb-ud-daula was influenced by the Shāh is evident from an incident narrated by Prof. Khalīq Ahmad Nizāmi who writes:

> "An incident showing his wisdom and justice will always illuminate the pages of history. When he was breathing his last, he instructed his troops (at Hapur where he was at the time and a Hindu fair was being held) that Hindu pilgrims visiting the Ganges fair should be provided complete protection."[64]

Ahmad Shāh Abdāli

A judicious appraisal of the chaotic conditions produced in the country by the incompetence of the later Mughal kings and depravity of their nobles and courtiers had convinced the Shāh that the primary need of the hour was to do away with the disruptive and refractory forces in the country since these had made insecure the life and property of almost every citizen and left no room for any reform or constructive work to salvage the situation. The three rebellious forces, as stated above, had neither any experience of running an orderly form of government in a country with a pluralistic society nor possessed the qualities like forbearance, large-heartedness, sense of resposibility etc. These forces were also not interested in bringing about stability and tranquillity in the country, nor they wanted to win the confidence of all sections of Indian population. The Shāh had, therefore, reached the conclusion that it was imperative to save the country from the domination of these indisciplined elements, particularly the Marathas, who had turned the most sensitive part of country, the territory from Lahore to Oudh, into a virtual battle-ground.

Sikhs and Jāts were also predatory powers, next only to the Marathas, who were interested only in plundering the flourishing cities and other urban centres.

Another conclusion arrived at by the Shāh was that the danger of lawlessness facing the country could be combated by an experienced military leader having a sufficient and disciplined force at his command. Such a commander was to be brave and an accomplished fighter, but not arrogant and autocratic. He had to be God-fearing and to keep himself above the politics of intrigue and court conspiracies which had undermined the Mughal empire. The man, in the Shah's view, had to have an objective higher than seeking dominance of any particular racial or regional group or even establishing his own hegemony. In short, the Shāh, wanted a man who could restore law and order in the country as well as re-establish the lost position of Islam in it. He considered Nawāb Najīb-ud-daula suitable for achieving these ends, but he was conscious of the fact that the Nawāb did not possess enough power and resources to defeat the rebellious forces by himself since some of these had strengthened their military power to a degree that no single power then existing in India could crush them. Hence a new military commander from abroad was needed, but he had to know the country and its people, their beliefs and culture, the political situation and the characteristics and weaknesses of the contending forces in India trying to overrun the country. The Shāh wanted a magnanimous soul not interested in establishing his own rule over the country but one who was prepared to save India from its impending dangers and leave the governance of the country to some capable Mughal prince or a competent Indian noble or minister. This was not only a realistic solution in the given circumstances but was also demanded by patriotism as well as the desire for welfare of the Muslim community in India.

It was a delicate and difficult task involving great risks which are natural to such ventures. The Shāh's choice fell on Ahmad Shāh (1136-1186 1723-1772) of Sadozai branch of the Abdāli or Durrāni tribe, an Afghān chief who had first estab-

lished himself in Herāt, captured Qandahār and then reduced to obedience the whole of Afghanistan. He was not an stranger to India. He had been born in Multan[65] where a road is still named after him. Between 1747 and 1769 he had attacked India nine times and visited India six times before he was invited by Shāh Waliullah and Najīb-ud-daula when he fought the battle of Pānīpat. He was aware of the political conditions of India, its nobles and ruling circles and its military powers and their strategy. He was a born leader of men and had the qualities required of the founders of empires. He had consolidated the unruly Afghans and welded them into a nation, established law and order, promulgated laws to achieve the ends of justice and appointed censors of public morals. He was brave and upright in his personal character, commanded the respect of his people, and was fond of spending his time with the scholars. He respected the saintly persons and religious scholars and was always inclined to increase his knowledge. Kind and considerate by nature, he tolerated religious differences and wanted to be just to all. A learned man inclined to the path of spirit[66] he had introduced certain reforms in Afghanistan. One of these was the re-marriage of widows. In regard to the character of Ahmad Shāh, Fryer writes in the *History of Afghanistan* that Ahmad Shāh was untouched by numerous eastern vices : he kept himself away from wine and opium; was neither greedy nor hypocrite : strictly followed religious precepts; and his simple yet sober habits had endeared him among the people. He was always available to the common people and was very particular about restoring justice to all. Nobody ever complained about the judgement delivered by him.[67]

Ahmad Shāh had invaded India six times for different reasons which had left no more impression than to be feared as a potential invader of India. His troops had often indulged in excesses not expected of an army fighting for the cause of Islam. Some of his invasions had even caused worry to the Shāh or those nearer to him, yet he appeared to be the only ray of hope in the then welter of conflicts, plunderings and anarchy. Shaikh

Muhammad Ashiq of Phulat is on record that the Shāh firmly held the view that Ahmad Shāh Abdāli would one day capture the country. Once, in reply to a question asked by Bahādur Khān Biloch, the Shāh had replied, "He would subdue this country". Another time a rumour about the death of Ahmād Shāh Abdāli gained currency. When Shaikh Muhammad 'Ashiq enquired the Shāh about it he replied :

> "It appears that Ahmad Shāh Durrāni would come to this country again and crush the infidels here. This is why he has been kept alive by God despite his oppressions."[68]

The Shāh hoped that God will help Abdāli to take to the right path and enable him to accomplish the task which was apparently beyond the competence of any ruler or military leader within India. Once he told Hakim Abul Wafā Kashmiri that the difficulties faced by Abdāli were due to the high-handedness he had permitted during his past incursions on Indian towns. The Shāh hoped that he would take the right path later on.[69]

The Shāh wanted Abdāli to extricate the country from its chaotic conditions and then handover the administration to some capable person of India's ruling family. The Shāh had even predicted that Abdāli would not come to India to stay here but would go back after nominating one of the Mughal princes as the Emperor of the country.[70]

Shāh Waliullah got Najīb-ud-daula to write letters to Ahmad Shāh Abdāli and then addressed him a persuasive letter which reflects his political insight, courage and zeal for religion besides his command over Persian language.[71] In this letter he described the then condition of the country, the old and inefficient way of its administration, the situation in various provinces and the different racial and religious communities, the power wielded by them, the short-sighted policies followed by earlier rulers in regard to them and gradual acquisition of power and prestige by some regional forces. He specifically gave an account of Marathas and Jāts, their frequent plundering raids and the humiliations to which Muslims were made to undergo by them.

Abdāli was urged by the Shāh to intervene in the matter and revive the decaying Mughal empire, since, as the Shāh pleaded, it was a duty incumbent on him by virtue of his being the foremost military power of the day in the region extending from India to Iran. The Shāh wrote in his letter:

> "There is no other king besides you who in these times, has the power, foresight and military skill necessary to defeat the enemies.[72]"

He continued further:

> "We, the bondsmen of God, take the Apostle of God on whom be blessings and peace as our intercessor and appeal to you in the name of God that you should fight the enemies of God so that you may be blessed with a great merit, your name may appear in list of fighters for the cause of God, you may be rewarded in this world and Muslims may be rescued from the oppressions of the infidels."[73]

The Shāh's political insight and deep knowledge of the nascent insurrectionary powers, some of which were then regarded as too powerful or indefeatable, had enabled him to make an extremely correct estimate of them. About the Marathas, he wrote:

> "It is easy to overthrow the Marathas provided the Muslims make up their mind to do so. In fact, the Marathas are themselves small in numbers, but numerous other groups have joined hands with them. If any one of these groups or a section of these is beaten, they will part company and render the leading faction powerless. Since these people are not bold, they rely on marshalling a vast army out-numbering even the ants and locusts. They do not possess either sufficient valour or armaments."[74]

The letters sent to Ahmad Shāh Abdāli by Najīb-ud-daula and the Shāh did not prove fruitless. In 1173/1759, Ahmad Shāh Abdāli once more bent his steps towards India determined to break the power of Marathas, and help Najīb-ud-daula and

Shuja-ud-daula, who had united for the protection of Muslims. One year was spent in skirmishes on his way to the Indian capital. At last the decisive battle of Pānipat was fought on 7 Jamādi-ul-Ākhir 1174/14 January 1761 between the Marathas on the one side, and Afghans and their Muslim partisans, on the other, which finally eliminated the Marathas from the newly emerging political map of India. Zakā Ullah, the author of *Tārikh Hindustān*, has given a brief description of this fateful battle in these words :

> "The engagement raged with the utmost fury, but the battle seemed to be going in favour of the Marathas. Ahmad Shāh got an announcement made that the stragglers dribbling away to the rear would be put to death. At the same time, he brought up his fresh reserves to attack the enemy flank to his left. Bhāo Sahib and Vishwas Rāo were directing their forces in the centre, but with dramatic suddenness, resistance of the Marathas collapsed. They turned their backs and fled at full speed, leaving the field of battle covered with heaps of the dead. The victors pursued them as much as 15 or 20 miles making heaps of their dead bodies. The fugitives who were able to evade their pursuers were killed by the villagers. Jānkoji Sindhia had taken refuge with a Durrāni Afghan but was found out and put to sword. Ibrāhīm Khān Gārdi was taken prisoner and sacrificed to the enmy's rage after a week. Samsher Bahadūr fled but he was killed by his pursuers. Malhar Rāo escaped to Malwa where he was joined by Apaji Sindhia; the latter after receiving a wound in the leg. These were the two prominent Marathas who could save themselves, for all others had perished in the Pānipat inferno. Never was there a calamity that had diffused so much depression in the Marathas. Bālāji in failing health after the disaster, devoted his time to the teaching of Sanskrit in his temple, and died

after a short while."[75]

Never was a defeat more complete, says Elphinstone. Sir Jadu Nath Sarkar says that there was not a house in Maharashtra which had nobody to mourn for and the entire leadership of Marathas was wiped out in one encounter.[76]

As desired by the Shāh, Ahmad Shāh having accompalished the job retreated to Qandahār and did not invade India again. Zakā Ullah says :

> "After the great victory Ahmad Shāh Abdāli came to Delhi from Pānīpat. A few days thereafter, he nominated Prince 'Ali Guhar as Emperor with the title of Shāh 'Ālam, and recommended him to appoint Shujā-ud-daula as his minister and Najīb-ud-daula as Amīr-ul-Umrā. As Shāh 'Ālam was not at Delhi at the moment, he got Shāh 'Ālam's son Javān Bakhat to deputise for his father and appointed Najīb-ud-daula as the regent and administrator of Delhi. He granted a robe of honour to Shujā'-ud-daula before despatching him to take over as the governor of Oudh and Allahabad. Thereafter he left for Qandāhār."[77]

Prof. Khalīq Ahmad Nizāmi gives some more details of the happenings on this occasion.

> "Ahmad Shāh Abdāli tried his best, after the battle of Pānīpat, to recall Shāh 'Ālam to Delhi. He sent his own courier, but when Shāh 'Ālam did not respond to his summons, Abdāli got a letter sent by Shāh 'Ālam's mother Nawāb Zeenat Begum imploring him to shake off the tutelage of the Englishmen and re-establish his power at Delhi in the presence of Ahmad Shāh Abdāli."[78]

Prof. Nizāmī also says :

> "Neither the Maratha nor Jat, nor yet Sikh stirrings were broad-based and catholic enough to think of maintaining the unity and integrity of the country. The Shāh wanted, under the new set up conceived by him, to restore the central power of the days of Akbar.

> Jahāngīr, Shāh Jahān and Aurangzib and the sovereignty of the empire based on justice but not ruled by autocratic kings.....Had any spark of life been left in the empire, it would have easily taken advantage of the Pānīpat encounter and re-established its authority over India for a few centuries to come. But the Mughal empire was, in fact, like a lifeless body and the benefit accruing from the battle of Pānīpat was availed of by the victors of Plassey."[79]

Shāh 'Ālam lost this opportunity owing to his lack of courage and prudence, despite the insistance of his mother Zeenat Mahal, and came back to the Red Fort after ten years on 17 Ramazan, 1185/25 December 1771. The tragic fate that awaited him and his successors, culminated in the great uprising of 1857 which brought the Mughal empire formally to an end and transferred the administration of the country to the rising British power. These happenings need not be recounted here.

Shāh 'Abdul 'Aziz, the son of Shāh Waliullah continued the reformatory work started by the Shāh, but directed his political endeavours against the British rulers who had, by his time, became the greatest danger to the sovereignty and independence of the country.

After Shāh 'Abdul 'Aziz, two of his disciples Saiyid Ahmad Shahid and Shāh Ismāil Shahīd, tried to translate the teachings of the Shāh contained in the *Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha* and *Izālat al-Khafa* into practice and sacrificed their lives for establishing a truly Islamic state on the pattern of right-guided caliphate. How much were they influenced by the thought of Shāh Wali-Ullah what were their aspirations, how farsighted and large-hearted were they, what efforts they made to save the Muslims from tyrannical oligarchy of the Sikhs in the Punjab (as Shāh had tried to protect the society in his own time from the interminable depredations of the Marathas and Jāts) and what type of government they wanted to establish by overthrowing the alien rule of the Englishmen can be seen from the letters they wrote to the then rulers, grandees and prominent Muslims.[80]

Notes and References

1. A few years before the birth of Shāh Waliullah.
2. Vincent A. Smith, *The Oxford History of India*, Delhi, 1985, p. 499.
3. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, pp. 414-15.
4. Suraj Mal earnestly advised Bhāo to start guerilla operations in the traditional Maratha fashion but Bhāo contemptuously rejected the advice as those of "the chatter of goatbeards and Zamindars." The taunt deeply wounded the pride of the Jat who left saying, "If the Brahmin wins he will send his couriers to collect the revenues of Hindustan, and we shall have to wash his loin-cloths."
5. Shivaji first levied *chauth* or one-fourth of the agricultural produce in the conquered territories as a guarantee for not attacking the territory again or for defence of the people against aggression by another power. He charged 30 per cent from the farmers within Maharashtra which was later increased to 40 per cent.
6. Mountstuart Elphinstone, *The History of India*, London, 1866, p. 620.
7. A foreign country.
8. Zakā Ullah, *Tarīkh-i-Hind*, Delhi, 1897, Vol. IX, p. 305.
9. There is ample evidence to show that Bābā Nānak kept company with several Muslim mystics, the most prominent among whom was Shaikh Farid of Pāk Patan, whose 142 stanzas were included into the *Adi Granth*. Other Muslim mystics intimate with Bābā Nānak were Pīr Jalāl, Miān Mittha, Shāh Sharaf-ud-din Pīr 'Abdur Rahmān and Shāh Ibrāhīm. Bābā Nānak is also reported to have visited Baghdād and the two holy cities of Makkah and Medina.
10. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Delhi, 1986, Vol. I. pp. 53-54.
11. Gurū Arjun was, in fact, sentenced to death on the advice of a Hindu banker Chandu Shāh whose daughter's hand Arjun had refused to accept for his son. On the other hand, the Muslim divine Miān Mīr tried in vain to intercede on behalf of Gurū Arjun. (*A History of Sikhs, op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 60-61).
12. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Delhi 1986, Vol. I, p. 73.
13. Gurmit Singh, *Guru Nanak's Relations with the Lodis and Mughals*, Delhi, 1987, p. 156.
14. *History of the Sikhs, op. cit.*, p. 103.

15. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 322.

16. Thomas Patrick Huges, *Dictionary of Islam*, Art : Sikhism (Delhi, 1978) and Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs* (Delhi, 1986) Vol. I, p. 17.

17. *Ibid.*

18. For details see '*Rise of the Sikhs*' in Mohiuddin Ahmad's *Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd-His life and Mission*, Lucknow, p. 197.

19. For details see *Saiyid Ahmād Shahīd-His Life and Mission* by Mohiuddin Ahmad, Lucknow, p. 19.

20. Prof. Khaliq Ahmad Nizām, *Shāh Waliullah ke Siyāsi Maktubat*, Delhi, 1969, p. 175.

21. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 305.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Shāh Waliullah Ke Siyāsi Maktūbāt*, p. 175.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 177.

25. Summarised from *Tārikh Hindustān, op. cit.*, Vol. IX, pp. 316-18,

26. *Kalemāt-i-Tayyabāt*, letter no. 40.

27. *Ibid.*, letter no. 54.

28. *Ibid.*, letter no. 86.

29. The custom of Rajput nobility to kill their women and children and jump into the raging fire, in the case of suffering a defeat at the hands of an inveterate enemy.

30. *Al-Qaul al-Jali*, MSS.

31. Q. 13 : 26.

32. *Al-Furqan*, Shāh Waliullah Number, Vol. 7, No. 9-12, Ramadhan–Dhil Hijja, 1359, pp. 322-23.

33. For details see Vol. II of the *Saviours of Islamic Spirit* by the author.

34. It is believed that the letter was written to Ahmad Shāh Abdāli.

35. Khaliq Ahmad Nizāmi, *Shāh Waliullah ke Siyāsi Maktūbāt* (Delhi, 1969), p. 15.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 22-23.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

41. Q. 3 : 27.

42. Unfortunately the name of the Emperor to whom this letter was addressed is not known.

43. *Shāh Waliullah ke Siyāsī Maktūbāt, op. cit.*, pp. 80-81.

44 The Shāh has not mentioned the name of the King, nor it is possible to ascertain it now.

45. *Shāh Waliullah ke Siyāsi Maktūbāt, op. cit.*, p. 135-36.

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 136-137.

47. The reference is to Ahmad Shāh Bahādur son of Muhammad Shāh who ascended the throne in 1161/1720.

48. *Siyāsi Maktūbāt*, op. cit., p. 111.

49. Collection of the letters of Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm and Shāh Waliullah (Osmania University MSS), p. 214.

50. *Ibid.*

51. Four letters to him are given in the *Shāh Waliullah ke Siyāsi Maktūbāt* (pp. 66-70).

52. For details see Nasīr-ud-din's *Najīb-ut-Tawārīkh*, MSS Habib Ganj Library and *Shāh Waliullah Ke Siyāsi Maktūbāt*, pp. 231-34.

53. See Sarkar, J. N., *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, p. 416.

54. *Tārikh Hindustān*, op. cit., Vol, IX. p. 315.

55. Shah Abdul Aziz, *Malfūzāt*, Mathura, 1314 A. H., p. 81.

56. *Siyāsi Maktūbāt, op. cit.*, p. 232.

57 *Siyasi Maktūbāt, op. cit.*, p. 19.

58, *Ibid.*, p. 20.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 21,

61, *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

62. *Ibid.*, pp. 25-27.

63. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-26.

64. *Siyāsi Maktūbāt, op. cit.*, p. 234 on the authority of Sir J. N Sirkar.

65. See Collin Davies article on Ahmad Shāh Durrāni in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam.*

66, See *Ahmad Shah Durrani-Father of Modern Afghanistan* by Dr. Ganda Singh, Asia Publishing House, 1949,

67. Cited from the *Siyāsi Maktūbāt, op. cit.*, pp. 225-26.
68. *Siyāsi Maktūbāt, op. cit.*, pp. 26-27.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
70. *Ibid,*
71. This letter can be seen on pp. 6-17 of the *Siyāsi Maktūbāt.*
72. *Siyāsi Maktūbāt, op. cit.*, p. 12.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
74. *Ibid,*. p. 86.
75. Zakā Ullah, *Tarīkh Hindustān, op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 309.
76. *Siyāsi Maktūbāt, op , cit.*, p. 45.
77. *Tarikh Hindustan, op. cit.*, Vol. IX, pp. 309-10.
78. *Siyāsi Maktūbāt, op. cit.*, pp. 45-46.
79. *Ibid., op. cit.*, pp. 45 and 47.
80. For details see *Saiyid Ahmad Shahid—His Life and Mission*, Lucknow, 1975 by Mohiuddin Ahmad and *Seerat Saiyid Ahmad Shaheed*, Vol. I, by the author.

X

Reformatory Endeavours
A Distinctive Feature of the Shah

It is a common experience that those having an intellectual and literary bent of mind and endowed with a penetrating intellect and discernment in academic matters usually limit their activities to studies, academic discussions, exploration of intellectual issues, teaching and writing either because they are completely disinterested in the social and political conditions of the country or because of their inability to descend from their intellectual heights to the level of mundane affairs and problems faced by the commonality. Among the scholars of the past, we find only two exceptions. One of these was Abu Hāmid al-Ghazzāli (d. 505/1111) whose *magnum opus*, the *Ihyā Uloom id-Dīn* is a critique of the different sections of Muslim society of his time. His work shows his acquaintance with modes and morals of the common people to the same extent as he was aware of the comportment of scholars, mystics, rulers and nobles, merchants and craftsmen. His work shows an awareness of the deceptions of self and devilish instincts of the different classes of peoples which lead them astray from the right path, transmute the spiritual ends and realities and create an attitude of callousness towards the supreme objective of winning the pleasure of God.[1]

The same is true of the *Talbīs-o-Iblīs* of Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 597/1201) in which the vices found among different sections of the people have been dealt with showing the incisiveness of the author's intellectual grasp. The author has, in this work, taken stock of every class and group of the Muslims from the stand-point of *shari'ah*. His critique does not spare either the scholars of *fiqh* and *hadīth*, the literati, poets, administrators and the rulers, mystics or the people engaged in other walks of life and exposes their faults and self-delusions.[2] However, Ibn al-Jawzi is at places too severe in his criticisms in the *Talbīs-o-Iblīs*, which, being negative in character and unaccompanied by positive suggestions for reform and improvement, lose their effectiveness. The reason perhaps is that the theme selected for the work did not allow him to deal with the remedial measures.

A Word to each Section of Muslims

In comparison to the reformative endeavours of these two great scholars, the efforts made by Shāh Waliullah appear to be more comprehensive and instructive. He has separately addressed the Muslim rulers, nobles, courtiers, men-at-arms, traders and craftsmen, descendants of the saints, impious scholars and sermonizers and those saintly men who had withdrawn from the world and diagnosed their fallacies and errors. He also admonishes the Muslim community as a whole, indicates their faults and failings and suggests the measures necessary for regaining their lost vigour. These writings of the Shāh reflect his zeal for religion in a diction so vigorous and effective as it would be difficult to find even in the compositions of the two reformers mentioned earlier. We are presenting here a few extracts from the first two volumes of the *Tafhīmāt-i-Ilāhiya*[3] in which the Shāh speaks to the influential and leading classes of his time. These passages reflect the Shāh's awareness of the contemporary affairs, his insight and moral courage :

To the Muslim Rulers

"O kings, the celestial sphere demands that you should

unsheath your swords and do not put them back in the scabbards until Islam is separated from polytheism and the headstrong leaders of blasphamy and wickedness do not consider themselves weak and powerless, and they abandon the path of rebellion forever. *And fight them until persecution is no more and religion is all for Allah.*[4] When the difference between the *kufr* (infidelity) and Islam becomes marked and clear, then you ought to appoint commanders at a distance of three or four days' journey. The men to be appointed should be upright and just and strong who may be able to restore justice to the weak and oppressed, enforce the divine commandments and, at the same time, are vigilant enough to curb any rebellion in future. They should not allow the contumacious elements to regroup themselves again for waging war, nor to apostatize, nor yet to commit any major sin. Islam's teachings should be preached openly and everybody should perform the prescribed observances faultlessly. The administrator of each city ought to have adequate power at his command to mend the ways of the people under him.

"At the same time, nobody should be allowed to become powerful enough to have designs for personal benefit and challenge the authority of the government.

"It is necessary for larger regions within the dominion that such governors should be appointed who have the experience of conducting warfare. Such governors should be allowed to have an army consisting of twelve thousand combatants, but only those should be recruited who possess the zeal to fight for the cause of God, be not scared of being ridiculed for it, be willing to fight every person recalcitrant and stiff-necked and be also capable of it.———O kings, the Divine will shall require you, after you have accomplished these tasks, to divert your attention to the social and family life of the people, to redress their mutual differences and to make such arrangements that no dispute arises that contravenes the *shari'ah*. Only then can people enjoy peace and amity."[5]

To the Nobles and Grandees

"Noblemen ! Do you have no fear of God that you are getting mesmerised by the pleasures of the finite world ? You have abandoned the people placed under your charge, so that some may destroy the other. Do you not indulge in drinking blatantly and are not even ashamed of it ? Do you not see the mansions built by some where fornication is committed, wine is drunk and gambling is the pastime ? But you neither intervene nor do anything to stop these vices. What about those major towns where the criminal law of Islam has not been enforced for the last six hundred years ? When you find a weak offender, you apprehend him, but the powerful one you leave alone. All of your brains are devoted to have the most delicious victuals and to enjoy the fair and lovely women—nothing catches your attention save the expensive clothes and large buildings. Have you ever bowed down to God ? You speak of God only in your table-talks and prattle. It seems that in your parlance God simply means the march of time since you often say that God is potent to do this or that—the change brought by time seems to signify God for you."[6]

To the Armymen.

"Soldiers and Fighters ! God had equipped you to fight for His cause. The intention was that the will of God would prevail, He would be rendered homage and you would root out all the vestiges of polytheism. But you have forsaken what you had been created for. Now the purpose of your keeping the horses and collecting arms is simply to amass wealth ; you are always forgetful of *Jihad*, sip wine, drain cups of hemp, shave your beards and keep moustaches; you harass the people and never give what is due for the goods received by you from others. By God you shall shortly be returned unto God and then He shall let you know what you have been doing. What God wants of you is that you should adopt the dress and manners of pious fighters for the cause of God, keep the beards and trim the moustaches offer the five daily prayers, never swindle the

goods of the people and remain firm in the field of battle. You ought to learn the concessions allowed in offering prayers while travelling or fighting, such as, reduction in the number of obligatory prayers to be offered, offering of different prayers at a time, foregoing *sunnat* prayers on such occasions, ritual ablution with sand and then offer the prayers regularly. You ought to be upright even in your intentions for it is then that God will bless you with prestige and honour and make you overcome your enemies."[7]

To the Artisans and Craftsmen

'Artisans and Craftsmen ! You lack the sense of responsibility and trust and are completely forgetful of devotion you ought to pay your Lord. You go on pilgrimage to *Madār*[8] and *Salār*[9], and many amongst you indulge in charms and sorcery. Those who have taken up these practices as their means of livelihood, wear a particular dress and take a particular type of food. Those who have a meagre income, do not take care of their wives and children. Some of you are habitual drunkards and some even sell the honour of their women unworthily for their sustenance. What an evil fortune ! These persons are bringing themselves to ruin both in this world and the next, although God has provided innumerable vocations for earning one's livelihood. These can adequately meet the needs of these persons and their dependants, provided they exercise moderation and are contented with the earnings that are sufficient for virtuous living. But you have been ungrateful to God and taken to evil means for earning your livelihood. Do you not fear the chastisement of the Hell—the worst abode for anyone.

"Lo ! You ought to devote yourself to the recollection of God in the morning and evening and spend the day in pursuing your professions, keep the company of your own women during night, limit your expenses to your income and save something for helping the wayfarer and the poor and meeting your own emergent expenditures. If you do not adopt this course, then,

surely you have taken a wrong path and what you are doing is not correct and you will never succeed."[10]

To the Descendants of Saints

'Lo! You are unjustly sticking to the customs of your forefathers, O sons of the saints of old! I ask you why have you divided yourselves into groups and factions? Your fraternities have each a different set of rituals. You have left the way taught by the Apostle of God, Muhammad, on whom be peace and blessings, and elevated yourselves to the position of guides, calling the people to join your own orders. Each one of you considers himself to be on the right path, capable of directing others, although he has himself lost the way and is misguiding others We do not approve of those who take others under their spiritual fraternity simply for financial benefit: they are misusing consecrated learning for earthly benefit. They adopt the bearings and habits of the pious because they cannot achieve wealth and position in its absence. Nor I admire those who ask the people to comply with their own whims and desires rather than the directives of God and His Prophet. These persons are robbers and cheats who have rather exposed themselves to a great peril.

"Beware! Never follow anyone who does not call you to the Book of God and *sunnah* of the Prophet or asks you to follow his own teachings. The gatherings of the common people are no place for the prattle about esoteric practices of the mystics since the ultimate end of *tasawuf* (mysticism) is to attain the state of *ihsān*.[11] Can't you see the warning in the following verse of the Qur'ān?

> "This is My Straight path, so follow it. Follow not other ways, lest ye be parted from His way."[12]

To the Religious Scholars

"You deem yourselves scholars, O blockheads! You are absorbed in Greek sciences and the grammar and syntax considering these as the only branches of learning to be specialised.

Hark ye ! knowledge is either an explicit verse of the Qur'ān or an authentic and living *sunnah* of the holy Prophet.

"You ought to learn the Qur'ān ; master the grammatical and lexicographical principles; discover the occasion for revelation of each verse, and, grasp the meanings of difficult passages. Similarly, you ought to abide by the *ahādith* which have already been authenticated. You ought to know how the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) used to offer prayers, how he performed ablution, what was his daily routine, how he performed the *hajj*, how he fought the enemies, how he talked to others, what was the decorum he observed in conversation, what were his morals and also try to follow his example meticulously. You ought to follow his *sunnah*, but, mind it the *sunnah* should never be elevated to the status of obligatory injunctions. You have, likewise to grasp the obligatory observances like the essentials of ablution and prayer, estate or effects necessary (*nisāb*) for the poor-due (*zakāt*), and shares of property inherited by the kindred of a deceased person. Go through the biography of the Prophet, his companions and their descendants so that you develop an attraction for the world to come. Of course, these matters are in addition to the knowledge of obligatory observances, but the things in which you are absorbed have nothing to do with the disciplines partaining to the hereafter. These are all worldly branches of learning."[13]

He writes further :

"Let the sciences (e.g., grammar and syntax) which are just the means and instruments remain as they are and do not elevate them to the position of knowledge. Acquisition of knowledge is incumbent for diffusing the Islamic way of life among the Muslims but you never propagate the religious observances and practices. You simply apprise the people with unnecessary details.

' You have made the people think that the number of religious scholars is more than sufficient although there are large tracts where no scholar exists, and where they do exist Islamic observances are not established.[14]

Shāh Waliullah also goes on to censure the pietists and self-righteous sermonisers who are ever willing to condemn anyone as non-Muslim for not conforming to their self-conceived version of Islam.

To the Pietists and Sermonisers

"I ask those who take Islam as extremely austere and rigid as well as those pietists and self-righteous sermonisers cloistered in their monasteries, why they are so credulous, placing trust in all kinds of cock-and-bull stories. In your sermons you harangue on spurious and apocryphal traditions making the life of the people difficult and burdensome. You were born (as a Muslim) to make the life of the people easy and not arduous. You tell them the stories of those who in the state of attraction had lost their senses. Entanglement in the love divine is not a matter to be discussed openly but you present it in affirmation of your own views. You yourself suffer from misgivings in this regard and hold the path of mystics to be preferable. You had simply to learn the essentials of creed and the deep-felt way of its application in religious observances. It was not at all necessary to mix up these matters with the perceptions and practices of those who had lost their consciousness in the ecstasy of mystical experience, nor was *kashf*, the gnostic illumination of the mystics, to be mixed up with the prescribed observances and practices. You had only to ask the people to attain the stage of *ihsān*. You had to attain it yourself and then teach it to others. Do you not know that the greatest grace and blessing God has bestowed on you is the guidance you have received through the Apostle of God for that only constitutes the path of righteousness. Can you then avouch that whatever you are doing today conforms to the practices of the Messenger of God, on whom and his companions be the blessings and peace of God."[15]

To the Muslim Masses

"Now I turn to the generality of the Muslims and say: Lo! children of Adam, your sense of morality has become dormant;

greed and cupidity have carried you away; devil has captured your souls; women have become faddish and men violate the rights of women; what is unlawful is delightsome to you and lawful has become distasteful. By God, the Lord never wants your life to become burdensome. You ought to satisfy your saxual appetite by contracting marriage even if you have to wed more than one woman. Do not become fastidious in your living and limit your expenses within your means. Always remember that nobody shares the burden of others and do not make your life too hard for it would ultimately lead you to wickedness. The Lord wants that His bondsmen should make their lives unexacting within permissible limits and those who have the strength may comply with His commandments in a more meticulous manner Satisfy your hunger with foods procured from your earnings instead of trying to become a burden on others. It is not possible that others will fulfil all your demands. Similarly, do not become a parasite on kings and administrators for it is in your own interest to earn your living. God will suggest you the means to earn your livelihood that will suffice for you.

"O Sons of Adam, if God has blessed anyone with a house where he can live, water to quench his thirst, food sufficient to mitigate his hunger, cloth enough to cover the body and limbs and a wife chaste and helpful in maintaining his position in life, he should thank God for he has everything he needs in this world.

"Anyway, everybody should take up some profession for his sustenance and content himself with it. Moderation should be adopted as the rule of life and some of the spare time, particularly in the morning, evening and later part of night, should be devoted to the remembrance of God through *tasbīh*[1], *tahlīl*[17] and recitation of the Qur'ān. One should also listen to the Traditions of the Prophet, on whom be blessings and peace, and join the gatherings held for recollection of God.

"O Sons of Adam, you have adopted customs and usages which have deformed your religion. You hold gatherings on the

day of *'āshūra*[18] for things that are inappropriate. Similarly you have amusements and rejoinings on the occasion of *shab-i-barāt*[19] and consider it virtuous to have repast for your dead relat ons. Have you any argument to defend your behaviour ?

"Similarly, you have taken to numerous customs which have made your life harder, for example, you spend too much on your feasts. Another iniquitous convention among you is to regard divorce as illegal and remarriage of widows as immoral. You spend your time and money on indecorous conventions and rituals and have given up healthy practices.

"You have ruined your *salāt* (ritual prayers). Some of you are so engrossed in their professions that they never find time to offer the prayer while others waste their time in the company of story-tellers. Were these gatherings of story-tellers to be held near mosques the listeners would not have at least missed their prayers. You have ceased paying the *zakāt* (poor-due) although there would be hardly one among the affluent whose kinsmen do not include the poor and the needy Were such opulent persons to help their poorer kins or meet their expenses with the intention of paying they *zakāt*, they would have thus discharged their obligations of poor-due.

"Some of you, particularly the soldiers do not keep the fasts of *Ramadhān*, on the pretext that the hardships they have to bear do not allow them to keep the fast. You should know that the path you have taken to is wrong : you have made yourselves a burden on the government. When the king is unable to pay your dues you harass the common people—what a bad creature you are ! There are others who keep the fasts but do not take the *sahri* (predawn meal), nor give up toilsome works with the result that they find the fasts too exacting."

The Shāh concludes his disquisition to the masses with these words :

> "Celestial regions indicate a wide-ranging reform, but one can only get a glimpse of these from a small opening ; a sample is enough to form an estimate of the pile."[20]

Social Thoughts of the Shāh

Besides critic sing particular classes of Muslim society, the Shāh also condemned the sinful innovations and polytheistic practices borrowed by the Muslims from their non-Muslim neighbours; indifference of the scholars and the Muslim rulers to promote the knowledge of *hadīth* and *sunnah* and their failure to oppose the superstitious beliefs and practices of the masses. The religious scholars of his time who were normally pre-occupied with logic and philosophy ignored these un-Islamic practices either because they regarded these as of no consequence or did not want to antagonize the commonality. Shāh Waliullah gave attention to the need of reforming the Muslim society after Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid Alf Thāni who had denounced, in his several letters, the heterodox beliefs and practices that had crept into the Muslim society[21]. Endeavours designed to reform the Muslim society for restoration of its moral health, initiated by the Shāh were brought to completion by his sons and their disciples, particularly Syed Ahmad Shahīd and Shāh Ismā'il Shahīd. The former was a disciple of the Shāh Waliullah's son Shāh 'Abdul 'Āzīz, while the latter was the Shāh's grandson.[22]

Here we give a few examples from the *Tafhimāt-i-Ilāhiya* and *Wasiyat Nāma* by Shāh Waliullah.

> "One of the vicious customs prevalent among the Hindus is that when the husband of any woman dies, they do not allow her to re-marry. The Arabs were never given to any such practice, either before or after the advent of the Messenger of God, on whom be peace and blessings. Allah may bestow His grace on the man who may succeed in eradicating this evil practice followed by the commonality. If one is not able to abolish this usage among the people at large, one should atleast try to restore the practice followed by the Arabs in his own family and clan, and if this is also not possible, one ought to regard it as a wicked practice and hate it in one's heart, for this is the

lowest stage of repudiating anything not approved by the *sharī'ah*.

"Another unseemly practice followed by us is to have an unusually large amount of dower. The Prophet of God, on whom be peace and blessings, (and by following whose practice we can succeed in this world and the next), used to fix a dower amounting to twelve and half *awqiyah* which was equivalent to five hundred *dirhams* for the members of his household (although they were the best amongst all the human beings.)

"Yet another improper practice adopted by us is to be extravagant on joyous occasions and traditional celebrations. The Apostle of God, on whom be peace and blessings, is reported to have approved of a repast on the occasions of marriage and *'aqīqa* (on the birth of a baby). We ought to follow his example and desist from all other festivities and should not be lavish in our celebrations.

"We have also the queer habit of squandering money on occasions of bereavement by way of observing *sayyum*[23], *chahallum*[24], *shashmāhi*[25], *fatiha*[26] and *sālāna*[27] although none of these were prevalent among the earliest Muslims in Arabia. It would be better if we do not observe these ceremonies and offer condolence to the bereaved family during the next three days and provide victuals to the family members of the deceased for a day and night following the death of any person. After three days the women of the clan should apply *itr* to the clothes of dead man's female relatives and if the widow is alive, all mournings should be terminated after the expiry of the period of *'iddat*[28]

Syed Abul 'Āla Maudūdi has rightly observed in one of his articles on the significance of Shāh Waliullah's reformative

endeavour that:

> "These passages (from the *Izālatul Khafā* and *Tafhīmāt-i-Ilāhiya*) show how deeply the Shāh had pondered over the social conditions of the Muslims of his day, compared these with the past usages, and pointed out the evils most extensively. Such a critique necessarily creates an anxiety for reform in those who are well-meaning as well as able to draw a distinction between the wholesome and harmful customs and usages. The more such persons are enlightened by Islamic consciousness, the more they come to hate the un-Islamic influences in the society and develop an intense impulse to reform the society of all its abuses of ignorance. The next stage for this urge for reform and regeneration is to chart out a well-defined programme for the reconstruction of the society for giving it a correct direction. This is what we find the Shāh doing with complete precision according to a comprehensive plan presented in his critique of the Muslim society."[39]

Notes and References:

1. See *Ihyā Uloom id-Dīn*, Vols. II & VI or *Saviours of Islamic Spirit* by the author, Vol. I, pp. 112-176.
2. See *Talbīs-o-Iblīs*, pp. 119-349 or *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, Vol. I, pp. 203-228.
3. This work was published by the Madina Press, Bijnore for Al-Majlis al-'Ilmi, Dhabel, Surat in 1355/1936. It was later printed from Hyderabad in 1949.
4. Q. 8 : 34
5. *Tafhīmāt-i-Ilāhiya*, Bijnore, 1936, Vol. I, pp. 215-26.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 216.
7. *Tafhimāt,-i-Ilāliya*, Vol. I, p. 216.
8. Shāh Bad'i-ud-din of Makanpūr, known as Shāh Madar.

9. Syed Sālār Mas'ūd Ghāzi whose mausoleum at Bahraich attracts a large number of people who come with large flags from far and near.
10. *Tafhīmāt-i-Ilāhiyā*, Vol. I, p. 217.
11. *Ihsān* is to offer worship with a living awareness of the Divine Being, i. e., with the conviction that if the worshipper was not able to see God, he was certainly being watched by God.
12. *Tafhīmāt-i-Ilāhiya*, Vol. I, p. 214 (Q. 6 : 153).
13. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 214.
14. *Ibid.*, Vol, I, p. 215.
15. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 215.
16. Recollection of God with the help of a string of beads,
17. Loud recitation of God's praise.
18. The 10th of Muharram.
19. The fifteenth day of the month of Sh'abān.
20. *Tafhimāt-i-Ilahiya*, Vol. I, pp. 217-18.
21. See *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, Vol. III, chap. VI.
22. In this connexion the *Sirāt-i-Mustaqīm*, the discourses of Syed Ahmad Shahīd compiled by Shāh Ismā'il Shahīd and other works like *Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd-His Life and Mission* by Mohi-Uddin Ahmad can be seen.
23. Ceremony performed on the third day of a dead relative.
24. Ceremony performed on the fortieth day after death.
25. Ceremony performed after six months of death.
26. A gathering for the recital of the Qur'ān to supplicate for the dead person.
27. Annual ceremony to remember the dead person and supplicate for him. Normally all these ceremonies are accompanied by a feast of the relatives and distribution of food to the poor.
28. A probationary period of four months and ten days during which a widow is not allowed to re-marry.
29. *Al-Furqān* monthly, Shāh Waliullah Number, Vol. VII, No. 9-10, Ramadhan-Dhil Hijja, 1359 A. H., p. 84.

XI

Sons, Disciples and Eminent Contemporaries of Shah Waliullah

Worthy Sons and Successors

One of the distinctions enjoyed by Shāh Waliullah among the reformers and renovators of faith was that he had been blessed by God with sons and successors who kept burning the torch lit by him and propagated his mission so assiduously that innumerable treatises came to be written in local languages on the correct and authentic teachings of the Qur'an and *sunnah*, significance of *tauhid* and wickedness of polytheistic ideas and customs and sinful innovations, accepted methods for developing God-consciousness, means of spiritual purification and propagation of true faith through popularising the teaching of the Qur'an, *hadith* and *fiqh*. These writings created an enthusiasm among the people for the study of religious branches of learning. If one were to recount all these developments it would assume the shape of a history of several centres of reformatory endeavour within this country and outside it, and it would bring to light some very interesting features of the blessed movement started by the Shāh in the middle of 12th century A. H. (eighteen century A. D.)

A Happy Coincidence

It is a happy coincidence that the Shāh bears a resemblance to Mujaddid Alf Thāni, the founder of Naqshbandiyah-Mujaddidyah order to which he belonged. Four of the Mujaddid's sons. Khwāja Muhammad Sādiq, Khwāja Muhammad Sa'eed. Khwājā Muhammad M'asūm and Khwājā Muhammad Yahyā had attained eminence and spiritual perfection.[1] The first one of these, Khwāja Muhammad Sādiq died in 1025/1616 at the age of twenty-five. He is reported to have been admired and acclaimed by his father. The growth and development of the Mujaddiyah order can be attributed to the Mujaddids' remaining three sons with the exception of Shaikh Ādam Binnauri, who was a spiritual disciple rather than a lineal descendant and whose spiritual successors included such personages as Shāh Waliullah, Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd and Hāji Imdād Ullah Muhājir Makki. All the three sons of the Mujaddid brought the reformatory work of their father to completion although Khwāja Muhammad M'asūm had the unique distinction of spreading the Mujaddid's message to Turkistan, Arabia and Turkey A poet has correctly said :

Light of seven lands, Khwāja M'asūm
Whose radiance brightens from India to Rūm.

It was undoubtedly owing to the Mujaddid's thought transference and mystical efforts that the imperial throne of India was adorned not long after Akbar, by a prince who proved to be the protector of faith than a threat to Islam in this country. Khwāja M'asūm had, from the very beginning, been grooming him for this noble role and used to address him as the *Shāhzāda Dinpanāh*.[2]

The Shāh was also succeeded, in a like manner, by his four gifted sons[3]. Of these, the youngest one named Shāh 'Abdul Ghani was the first among his brothers to leave this fleeting world in 1227/1812.[4] The thought of Shāh Waliullah as well his reformatory endeavours meant for re-interpretation of religious realities and thereby reinvigorating the Muslim society were carried ahead by his remaining three sons, especially

Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz who was as successful in his endeavours as Khwāja M'asūm had been after Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid Alf Thani. The writings and the thought of Shāh Waliullah came to be universally accepted through the efforts of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz who can truly be acclaimed for completing the work of his father.

Before giving an account of the endeavours of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz we are giving here his biographical sketch which has been drawn from the *Nuzhatul Khwātir* of Hakīm Syed 'Abdul Hai.

Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz

Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz was one of the most erudite scholars of his time hailed by some of his contemporaries as the *Sirāj-al-Hind* (Light of India) and *Hujjat Allah* Evidence of God). He was born on 25 Ramzan, 1159/11 October, 1746 as indicated by 'Ghulām Halīm', the name given to him indicating the year of his birth. After memorising the Qur'ān, Shāh 'Abdul 'Aziz received systematic education under the guidance of his father which helped him to attain proficiency in different branches of learning. By the time Shāh 'Abdul 'Aziz was sixteen years of age, Shāh Waliullah died, but he continued his studies under Shaikh Nūrullah Budhānvi, Shaikh Muhammad Amīn Kāshmīri and Shāh Muhammad Ashiq bin Ubaidullah Phulti, the last-mentioned being one of the favourite disciples of the late Shāh. Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz has in a treatise given an account of the teachers, including his father, under whom he studied various subjects. As stated by him he was taught *Muwatta* along with *Mussawwa* and *Mishkat -al- Masabih* by his father. *Hisn i-Hisn* and *Shima'il Tirmidhi* were also studied under his father and brother Shaikh Muhammad The initial portion of *Sahih Bukhari* upto *Kitab-ul-Haj* was taught to him by Syed Ghulām Husain Makki, *Jami-Tirmidhi* and *Sunan Abi Dawūd* by Zahūr Ullah Moradābādi, part of *Sahih Muslim* and *Sunan Ibn Majah* by Mohammad Jawwād Phulti, certain parts of *Maqasid Jami al-Usūal* and *Musalsalāt* by Maulvi Jār Ullah and the remaining parts of *Sihah Sittah* by Shaikh Nūr Ullah and Khwāja Amīn, both disciples of his father

He was awarded the certificate of competence by his cousin and spiritual descendant of his father Shāh Muhammad 'Āshiq Phulti and Khwāja Muhammad Amīn. Both these persons had been the disciples of his father and were authorised to teach *hadīth* as mentioned in the *Tafhimāt-i-Ilāhiya* and *Shifā-al-'Alīl* Shaikh Muhammad 'Ashiq had also accompanied Shāh Waliullah when the later had studied *hadīth* under Shaikh Abu Tāhir Madni. The authorisation certificates issued to him have been cited in *Al-Irshād fi Muhimmāt al-Asnād.*

Shāh 'Abdul 'Aziz was tall, of delicate built and wheatish colour, wide-eyed and had a compact beard. He wrote the *naskh*[4] and *riq'ā*[5] and was proficient in archery, horse-riding and music. He taught his own brothers Shāh 'Abdul Qādir, Shāh Rafi-ud-din and Shāh 'Abdul Ghani as well as his son-in-law Maulānā 'Abdul Hai. His other distinguished disciples were Mufti Ilāhi Bakhsh Kandhalvi, Saiyid Qamr-ud-din Sonipati, Shāh Ghulām 'Ali Mujaddidi (a spiritual disciple of Mirza Mazhar Jān-i-Jānān) and Maulānā Syed Qutb-ul-Huda of Rae Bareli.

A number of his other disciples were initially taught by his brothers and awarded authorisation certificate by him. His grandson Shāh Muhammad Is'hāq b. Afzal 'Umri used to recite a portion of the Qur'ān every day which was elucidated by Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. He had actually kept up the practice of his father who used to deliver lectures on Quranic exegesis in this manner. The Shāh had completed the exegesis of the Qur'ān upto the eighth verse of *Sūrat-ul-Mā'ida* before his death. Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz carried it forward to the thirteenth verse of *Al-Hujurāt*, whence it was picked up by his daughter's son Shāh Muhammad Is'hāq as mentioned in the *Maqālāt-i-Tarīqat*. He was endowed with a unique retentive memory and being precocious, started teaching others at the age of fifteen. There was always a rush of students who wanted to study under him and on occasions even distinguished scholars attended his lectures.

Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz was afflicted at the age of twenty-five, by different chronic diseases which developed into such ailments as

hypochondria, leprosy and partial blindness. Some of his companions have enumerated fourteen troublesome diseases that distressed the Shāh with bodily and mental sufferings. He formally entrusted the responsibility of teaching the students to his brothers Shāh Rafi-ud-din and Shāh 'Abdul Qādir, but continued to deliver lectures, writing and giving juristic opinion. He used to deliver sermons on exegesis of the Qur'ān every Tuesday. As his age advanced he was unable to sit even for a short period : he then used to stroll between the old and new seminary and also continue lecturing to those attending him. Between the *'asr* and *maghrib* prayers, he normally went from his *madrasah* to the Jami Mosque supported by two persons. Those who wanted a clarification on any issue awaited for him on the road.

His diseases had resulted in loss of appetite and he often used to go without any type of food for several days. Sometimes he had a continued spell of fever. In his introduction to the *Manaqib Haidariyah* he writes :

> "I regret the deficiency in this introduction which was due to of my ailments which have resulted into loss of appetite which persists like long spells of fever. This is perhaps owing to gastric derangements : there is constant depression weakness, toothache with pain in bones all over the body."

In one of his letters to Amīr Haider bin Nūr-ul-Hasnain Bilgrāmi he wrote :

> "You want to know the condition of your friend : know that it is worse, deteriorating day by day. There are different diseases, external as well as internal, which have made him extremely nervous and restless. Each one of these ailments such as piles, gastritis, complete loss of appetite continuing for days together and movement of gasses causing suffocation when moving to the region of heart and splitting or rather unbearable headache in the case of their movement higher towards the head are enough to make one completely restless : to the Lord I complain and seek the remedy.

It has become difficult even to speak let alone to dictate any tract or a message."

Notwithstanding all these troubles, the Shāh remained affable, gracious and polite to his visitors and retained a ready wit. His gatherings were enlivened with strange disclosures, enlightening verses and the news about distant lands and people which were so graphically described by him that one thought that the Shāh had been a witness to them. Although the Shāh had never been to any city other than Calcutta, he had such an inquisitive mind that he used to obtain all the details about other places that could be learnt from books and the people coming to Delhi from outstations.

People from different walks of life used to call upon the Shāh. Poets and writers wanted to have his advice on their creations, the poor came to get his recommendations for assistance or help from the grandees and nobles, some had medicines prescribed by him while others were guided by him on the path of spirit for attaining spiritual perfection. Scholars and spiritual mentors coming from outside Delhi were normally his guests and stayed with him until the task they had come for had been accomplished. If anyone having differences with the Shāh on religious matters came to see him, he explained away the divergent views in such a manner that the visitor departed convinced that there was actually no difference of opinion between them.

Shaikh Muhsin bin Yahya Turhati writes in the *al-Yān'e al-Jani*:

"He occupied such a place of distinction and fame that people all over India deemed it a privilege to be taught by him or even his disciples.....None could be compared to him in any branch of learning It was through his ready wit that he silenced his adversaries by clever and amusing remarks His gift of the gab, cogent arguments and excellent mode of expression had gained for him a place of eminence amongst his contemporary scholars."

The Shāh had also been endowed with an exceptional insight and sagacity which had helped him to make an excellent interpreter of dreams. His interpretations were always so correct that it appeared as if he had already witnessed the coming incident. This is undoubtedly a distinction enjoyed only by those who are perfect in spirit. He enjoyed many more distinguishing characteristics which, in brief, can be described as special favour from God bestowed upon him. The following lines by an Arab poet if applied to him, would appear to be factually correct without the least exaggeration.

Characteristics unnumbered I have never seen
That have rated this man as a thousand of them.

It is virtually difficult to enumerate his distinguishing traits and characteristics. All of his works are generally cherished by the scholars because of their cogency and fluency and powerful diction capable of capturing the minds and hearts Whenever he came across any weak argument or objectionable opinion, he refuted it in an innocuous manner. In theological matters, refutation of Shi'ism was his favourite subject. He has discussed the Shi'ite creed from an intellectual plane with such a force and conviction that the objections raised by him have yet to be controverted.

The more important of his works that were widely acclaimed were as under :

A commentary on the Qur'ān entitled *Fath-ul-'Azīz* was dictated by him during the period of his serious illness. It was a voluminous work consisting of several parts but a greater part of it was lost during the disorder following the revolt of 1857, and one part of the beginning and two of the last portion are extant now. Another copious work was his *Al-Fatāwah fil Masāil-al-Mushkilah*', but now only its summary in two volumes is available. *Tuhfah Ithnā 'Ashariyah* (a critique of Shi'ite faith and doctrines) is his another work of exceptional merit. Among the other works of the Shāh deserving a mention here is the *Bustān al-Muhaddithīn*, a bibliography of the works on *hadīth* with biographical notes on the transmitters and scholars

of *hadith*,[8] but it remained incomplete. On the principles of *hadith* criticism, he wrote *Al-'Ujalatun-Nafiyah* in Persian language for the students of *hadith*. On rhetorics and theological dialectics his two excellent works are *Mizan-al-Balaghah* and *Mizan-al-Kalam* respectively. In one of his works entitled *As-Sirr al-Jalil fi-Mas'alatil Tafzil*, he has delineated the comparative distinctions of the first four caliphs while in the *Sirr-us-Shahadatain* he has recounted the martyrdom of Imam Hasan and Husain. He also wrote a tract on genealogy, the *T'abir-i-Roya* is on interpretation of dreams and several other brochures. In the field of logic and philosophy, he wrote a number of commentaries on various books as the *Mir Zahid Risalah*, *Mir Zahid Mulla Jalal*, *Mir Zahid Sharh-i-Muwaqif* and *Hashiyah Mulaku Saj* of which the last-mentioned is known as *'Azizyah*. He also wrote commentaries on *Sharh Hidayat al-Hikmah* of Sadr Shirazi and on the *Arjuza-i-Isma'i*. He also wrote a number of letters to the scholars and litterateurs of his time, and some lyrical glosses on certain odes of his father. Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz was a talented scholar with a complete command over the pen: his writings in prose are forceful and eloquent while his poetical compositions bear witness to his spontaneity and melody.

Shah Abdul 'Aziz died at the age of eighty years on the morning of 7 Shawwal 1239/5 June 1824. He was buried outside Delhi near the grave of his father.[9]

Propagation of the Shah's Mission

The renovatory endeavours of Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz can be divided into five categories as given here:

1. Popularisation of the message of the Qur'an through its exegesis in order to reform the popular creed of the masses by creating a direct link between them and the scripture.

 Promoting the study of *hadith* by making arrangements for its teaching and preparing teachers for its further diffusion.

3. Controverting the heterodoxical Shi'ite creed by

exposing the conspiracies designed to undermine the reverence in which the holy Prophet's companions and the Qur'ān were held by the Muslims.

4. Revival of *jihād* or fighting for the sake of God in order to prepare Muslims to face the danger to Muslim political power in India and to safeguard their freedom.
5. Grooming a group of such persons who could carry on his reformatory work in future.

Popularisation of the Quranic Teachings.

Shāh 'Abdul Azīz was immensely successful in diffusing the Quranic teachings among the masses and reforming their unsound creed and practices—a great mission of his father Shāh Waliullah. The late Shāh had died before he had completed the exegesis of the eighth verse of the fifth chapter i., e., *Sūrat-ul-Māida* of the Qurān. Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz took over the exegesis where his father had left and continued it in his lectures until he died while explaining the meanings of the thirteenth verse of Chapter *Sūrat-ul Hujurāt*. The exegesis was carried ahead by the Shāh's grandson Shāh Muhammad Is'hāq who had been educated under the care of the Shāh.

Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz used to deliver lectures on the Qur'ān on Sundays, Tuesdays and Fridays which were attended by all – the scholars as well as the laity – with great enthusiasm. An eloquent speaker as he was, he seemed to be at his best while delivering lectures on the Qur'ān[10]. His enthralling sermons created an eagerness among the people of Delhi, the metropolis of India, to know more about the Qur'ān which in turn gave birth to a movement for reforming the popular creed of the masses. His lectures also motivated the scholars to translate the scripture into local languages and write commentaries on it—a trend which continues to this day. Millions of people were thus to reform themselves by going back to the Qur'ān for guidance and enlightenment. In the then *madrasa* system of education in India, exegesis of the Qur'ān did not occupy any place of importance.[11] The Shāh's

endeavours in this regard resulted in restoring the subject its due place in the curriculum, more extensive and deeper studies of the Qur'ān were undertaken and, above all, the misconception that placing the Qur'ān directly in the hands of masses might prove harmful was removed It was really a fallacy propagated by the scholars who wanted to exploit the masses. The Shāh succeeded in dealing a death-blow to these misapprehensions.

The foremost intellectual contribution of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, which also contributed to the success of his mission, was his exegesis on the Qur'ān in Persian. Known as the *Fath-ul-Azīz* it is also called *Tafsīr-i-'Azīzi* and *Bastān-ut-Tafsīr* This work was dictated by the Shāh who says that it consisted of the commentary on *Sūrat-ul-Fātiha* and *Sūrat-ul-Baqarah* and from *Sūrat-ul-Mulk* to the last chapter of the Qur'ān.[12] However, the exegesis of the second chapter, *Sūrat-ul-Baqarah* was not complete, nor there is anything to shed light on the reason for its remaining incomplete. The present edition of the work, which has seen several reprints, contain the exegesis of this *Surah* upto verse 184 in its first part. The Second part covers from *Surah Al-Mulk* (67th Chapter) to *Al-Mursalāt* (77th Chapter) and the third the remaining 33 chapters, that is from *Surah Al-Nabā* to *Al-Nās*.

Haider 'Ali of Faizabad, a disciple of the Shāh (d. 1299/ 1822), subsequently wrote the commentary of the Quranic chapters left by the Shāh. In the *Maqālāt-i-Tariqat* Muhammad 'Abdul Rahīm Ziya says: "Maulvi Haider 'Ali, author of *Muntahi al-Kalām* completed the exegesis of the chapters not covered by the *Fath-ul-'Azīz* in 27 parts in compliance with the wishes of Sikandar Begum, the ruler of Bhopal, which has been seen by the writer of these lines."[13]

A part of this complementary work containing the exegesis of the fifth part of the Qur'ān[14] is available in the Nadwatul 'Ulama library.

Another exegetical work in Urdu entitled as the *Tafsīr-i-'Azīzi* alias sermons of Shāh 'Abdul 'Aziz was published by Ansari Press, Delhi in 1259/1843. It is a compilation by Abul

Farid Muhammad Imām-ud-din who says that the work consists of the lectures delivered by the Shāh on Tuesdays and Fridays which were committed to paper by a few of the listeners. The work contains the exegesis of *Sūrah Al-Mūminīn* (23rd chapter) to *Al-Saffāt* (37th chapter).

Although the exegesis of the Qur'ān by Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz remained incomplete, it contains considerable original material and discusses issues not touched earlier by other exegetes or which were being deliberately ignored by his contemporary scholars owing to the popular yet unsound beliefs and practices of the people in those days. To cite a few examples, the Shāh's commentary on the verse: *"He hath forbidden you only carrion, and blood, and swineflesh and that which hath been immolated to (in name of) any other than Allah"*[15], is particularly illuminating. Similarly the Shāh's exposition of magic in connexion with the Quranic phrase: *Sulaimān disbelieved not*,[16] and several other verses show the depth of his knowledge and incisiveness of his inquiry.

Promotion of the Study of Hadīth

The role played by Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz in fostering the development of *hadīth* is incomparable in the religious and intellectual history of India. He continued to teach the subject for nearly sixty-four years. He delivered lectures on the *Sihāh Sittah*[17] and wrote some valuable works like the *Bustān al-Muhaddithīn* and *Al-'Ujālatun Nāfi'a* which promote a correct understanding of the *hadīth* literature and help in appreciation of the unique scholarly attainments of the earlier scholars in this field. These works are in fact a quintessence of *hadīth* literature. The number of those who studied *hadīth* under the Shāh runs into hundreds of which quite a large number attained proficiency and eminence and devoted their lives to the teaching and propagation of the science in India and Hijaz. More than forty such scholars have been listed in the seventh volume of the *Nuzhatul Khawātir* of which, Maulana Shāh Muhammad Is'hāq Dehlavi, Maulana Shāh Muhammad Y'aqūb Dehlavi, Mufti Ilāhi Bakhsh

Kāndhalvi, Maulana Syed Awlād Hasan Qannauji, Mirza Hasan 'Ali Shāfe'i Lakhnavi, Maulana Husain Ahmad Malihābādi Muhaddith, Maulana Haider 'Ali Tonkvi, Maulana Khurram 'Ali Malhauri, Mufti Sadr-ud-din Dehlavi, Maulana Mufti 'Ali Kabir Machli-Shahri and Maulana Syed Qutb-ul-Huda Hasani Rai Barelvi were renowned for their erudition.

There is a very long list of scholars who were awarded proficiency certificates by the Shāh for the teaching of *hadith*. We, therefore, give here the names of only those who were celebrated for their spiritual perfection or were known for their achievements in other fields.

1. Shāh Ghulām 'Ali Dehlavi ... (Spiritual disciple of Mirza Mazhar Jān-i- Jānān).
2. Shāh Abu Sa'eed Dehlavi ... (Spiritual disciple of Shāh Ghulām 'Ali).
3. Shāh Ahmad Sa'eed Dehlavi ... (Another Chief Spiritual disciple of Shāh Ghulām 'Ali)
4. Maulāna Fazlur Rahmān Ganj Morādābādi ... (The Chief Spiritual disciple of Shāh Muhammad Afāq celebrated as a saintly soul).
5. Maulānā Buzurg 'Ali Marehri ... (Mentor of Mufti 'Ināyat 'Ali Kakorvi).
6. Shāh Bashārat Ullah Bahrā'ichi ... (An eminent Shaikh of the Mujaddidyah order).
7. Shāh Panāh 'Ata Salonvi ... (An eminent Shaikh of the Chishtiyah order).
8. Shaikh Zahūrul Haq Phulwārvi.

Shāh Muhammad Is'hāq was the most illustrious among the scholars of *hadith* mentioned here, who migrated to Hijaz in 1258/1842 where he achieved prominence and taught *hadith* to a large number of scholars. In India his notable disciples who continued to apply their energies to the propagation of *hadith* were Maulana Syed Nazīr Husain Muhaddith Dehlavi alias Miān

Sāhib, Qāri 'Abdur Rahmān Panīpati, Maulana Syed 'Alam 'Ali Moradābādi, Maulana Mufti 'Abdul Qayyūm (son of Maulana 'Abdul Hai Budhānvi, who was a spiritual successor to Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd), Maulana Fazlur Rahmān Ganj Moradābādi, Nawāb Qutb-ud-din Dehlavi (author of *Mazāhir-i-Haq*), Maulana Ahmad Ali Sahāranpūri (commentator of *Sāhih Bukhāri*), Mufti 'Inayat Ahmad Kakorvi (teacher of Maulana Lutfullah 'Aligarhi) and several other scholars. As stated by the author of *Nuzahatul Khawātir* this is the only chain of *hadīth* teachers whose proficiency certificate is most valued in India.

Among the disciples of Shāh Muhammad Is'hāq, Maulana Syed Nazīr Husain Dehlavi (d.1320/1902) continued to teach *hadīth* in Delhi for a long time and groomed several teachers and commentators as, for example, Maulana 'Abdul Mannān Wazīrābādi (whose disciples popularised the study of *hadīth* in the Punjab), Syed 'Abdullah Gaznavi Amritsari and his son Maulana Syed 'Abdul Jabbār Gaznavi (father of the celebrated scholar Maulana Dāwūd Gaznavi). Maulana Shamsul Haq Dayānvi (author of the *Ghayat-al-Maqsood*), Maulana Muhammad Bashīr Sahswāni, Maulana Amīr Ahmad Sahswāni, Maulana Hāfiz 'Abdullah Ghāzīpuri, Abu Muhammad Ibrāhīm Ārwi (author of the *Tariq-al-Najāt*), Maulana Syed Amīr 'Ali Malihābādi, Maulana 'Abdur Rahmān Mubārakpūrī (author of the *Tuhfat-al-Ahwazi*) in India and Shaikh 'Abdullah bin Idrīs al-Hasani al-Sinausi, Shaikh Muhammad bin Nāsir al-Najadi and Shaikh S'ad bin Ahmad 'Atīq-al-Najadi among the Arab scholars.

Shāh Muhammad Is'hāq also taught Shāh 'Abdul Ghani (d. 1296/1879) who had migrated to Medina. He had the honour of teaching *hadīth* to a great many students who imparted education of this discipline in the *madrasas* of India. Such eminent scholars as Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi and Maulana Muhammad Qāsim Nānautwi (the founder of Darul Uloom, Deoband) had been his students. Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi was, in turn, the preceptor of Maulana Yahya Kāndhelvi and Maulana Khalil Ahmad Sahāranpūri (author of

the *Bazl-al-Majhūd*). Maulana Khalīl Ahmad Saharanpuri's stature as a teacher of *hadīth* is indicated by the fact that he had taught Shaikh-ul-Hadīth Maulana Muhammad Zakariyah, who wrote the *Awjuz-al Masālik*. The great service to *hadīth* rendered by Maulana Muhammad Qāsim's disciples like Maulana Syed Hasan Amrohvi and Shaikh-ul-Hind Maulana Mahmūd Hasan Deobandi as well as Maulana Syed Anwar Shāh Kāshmiri and Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani hardly need be mentioned here. Similarly, the calibre of the Shāh as a teacher of *hadīth* is amply demonstrated by the *Al-Yān'e al Jani fi Asānid al-Shaikh 'Abdul Ghani* which was written by one of his disciples Maulana Muhsin bin Yahyā Turhati.

Confutation of Shī'ism

Shāh Waliullah had already tried, through his *Izālat al-Khafa 'an-Khlifat al-Khulfa'*, to demonstrate the unsound beliefs of the Shii'tes and thus warn the Sunnites against imbibing their creed. The task initiated by his father was brought to consummation by Shāh 'Abdul 'Āziz by his unique work, the *Tuhfa-i-Athna 'Ashariya* a book which can in truth and reality be called a epoch making work. Just as Mulla Muhibullah Bihāri's two works the *Sullam al Uloom* and *Musallam-us-Thabūt* had kept the best minds among Indian scholars engaged for a hundred years in writing glosses and keys to these two works,[18] the Shāh's *Tuhfa* had compelled the most eminent Shi'ite scholars to take the pen in hand for its refutation. To give an example Syed Hāmid Husain Kintūri (d. 1306/1889) wrote eight volumes of the *'Abaqāt al-Anwār fi Imāmat al-Āyimmatal-Athār*[19] which runs into more than 5000 pages His son Syed Nasir Husain contributed additional volumes to complete the work of his father. A Shi'ite polemical work entitled *Nujum-us-Samā* refers to other voluminous writings of Shiite scholars like Maulvi Dilār Ali Mujtahid, Hakīm Mirza Muhammad Kāmil Dehlavi, Mufti Muhammad Quli Khān Kintūri and Sultān-ul-'Ulamā Syed Muhammad besides that of Syed Hāmid Husain in reply to the Shāh's *Tuhfa*. Even a litterateur-philosopher like Mirza Hādi

Ruswā deemed it fit to try his hand at this pious task.

The Shāh had been, as we have already seen, extremely busy in the teaching and preaching of the scripture and *hadīth* as well as guiding people in the path of spirit. His serious illness had been a severe impediment in his literary engagements. It is thus difficult to visualise how the Shāh was able to find time for a work which required not only undivided attention but also to go through scores of Shi'ite works. Nobody who is not conversant with the political and cultural conditions of the twelfth century of Hijrah (till the first half of the eighteenth century A. D.) in India, particularly in northern part of the country around Delhi, and the influence of Shi'ism on Muslim nobility can appreciate the importance and necessity of the *Tuhfa* written by the Shāh. Shi'ite faith had started gaining influence with the return of Humāyūn from Iran and had gradually intensified with the ascendancy of Iranian nobility in the Mughal court, which eventually culminated in complete domination of Shi'as in the court of Farrukh Siyar, the emergence of Syed Brothers (Hasan 'Ali Khān and Husain 'Ali Khan), dominance of Nawāb Najaf Ali Khān in Delhi[20] and establishment of the Shi'ite kingdom of Oudh undet Shuj'ā-ud-daula.

In his introduction to the *Tuhfa-i-Athna 'Ashariyya* the Shāh throws light on the reason for penning this treatise.

> "The country in which we happen to be living and the times in which we have been born, the Athna 'Ashari faith has gained such a popularity that there would be few Sunni households of which one or more members have not accepted its creed or are not inclined towards it. Most of these people are ignorant of their past and indifferent to the creed of their ancestors. When these people enter into a discourse upon these matters with the Ahl-i-Sunnat wal-Jama'at, they put forward wrong arguments. Hence, solely for the pleasure of God, this tract has been set down so that the followers of this religion may not fall a prey to fallacious reasoning during such deliberations nor unknowingly

contradict the principles of their own creed, nor yet be in two minds about the matters which are based on truth and reality."[21]

The Shāh does not follow in the *Tuhfa* the conventional method of polemical disputation normally trying to refute the beliefs and practices of any religious sect, employing a scornful and contemptuous diction. The Shāh first traces the history of Shi'ism from its inception and its different sects and refers to the earlier Shiā scholars and their works. In his discussion on *khilāfah* and the accusation of the Shi'as against the companions of the Prophet, he brings into focus the fundamental belief in regard to *Ilahiyāt* (divinity), *nabūwa* (prophethood), ma'ād (hereafter) and *imāmah* (imamate), each in a separate chapter. Thus, he fully refutes the Shi'ite indictments against the first three caliphs, Ummul Mominīn 'Āisha and the Prophet's companions. The Shāh then passes on to the credulous beliefs and prejudices of the Shi'as and finally discusses the *tawalla* (excessive love) and *tabarra* (enmity) as embodied in the Shi'ite creed. The *Tuhfa* covers about 400 pages of a large format.

As the name of this work, the *Tuhfa-i- Ithna 'Ashariya or* Gift to the Twelves, indicates it excells in readability and simplicity of d ction—a fact acknowledged even by the Shi'ite scholars. But the books written in reply are indicative of the anger and hostility of the Shāh's opponents, as for example, *Sawārim-al-Ilāhiyāt* (Rod of Divinity), *Hosām-al-Islām* (Sword of Islam), *Saif-i-Nasiri* (The Nāsir's Sword), *Dhulfiqāi*[22] (The Double-tongued Sword). The book written by the Shāh was undoubtedly the need of the hour; it is now difficult to make an assessment of the marvellous service it has rendered to the Muslims of India. Nawāb Maulana Habībur Rahmān Khan Sherwāni, an ex-Minister for religious affairs in the erstwhile princely State of Hyderabad (whose family has always been affiliated with the Shāh and his spiritual disciples) once told this writer that the *Tuhfa* stemmed the rising tide of Shi'ism in India. The Book, published in 1215/1800, had become popular during the life-time of the Shāh

and its growing fame stimulated several Shi'ite writers to compose works to confute it. One of the Shāh's disciples Maulavi Aslami of Madras translated the work into Arabic. The writer of these lines has seen the manuscript of this translation in the library of Shaikh-ul-Islam 'Ārif Bey located in Bāl-i-Jibrīl, Madinah Munawwarah.

Opposition to the British Rule.

In so far as the challenge posed by the growing British political influence in India and the resulting loss of power by the Muslims was concerned, the Shāh made a realistic assessment of the then obtaining situation. His pronouncements on this issue speak of his acumen and far-sightedness befitting a scholar and reformer. Maratha depredations which invariably followed their unending incursions in different parts of the country had, in the times of Shāh Waliullah, virtually reduced the Mughal empire to impotence, destroyed all semblance of law and order in the urban centres and made the life, honour and property of the Muslims unsafe. Restoration of peaceful conditions, in these circumstances, was deemed by the Shāh as imperative as summoning of a fire-brigade to put out fire. Shāh Waliullah expected Ahmad Shāh Abdāli to perform almos· a similar task for he had insisted upon him to go back from India after restoring normalcy in the country. It was in his view, the only way to resuscitate the Mughal empire in India or to allow another power to emerge from within the country to take its place. If the Shāh did not succeed it was solely because of the lack of courage and foresight in Shāh'Ālam II. During the life-time of the hāh, the East India Company had not emerged as a dominent power forboding the establishment of an alien rule over the country from across the seven seas, which could have attracted his attention.

The political conditions in India, however, changed dramatically soon after the death of Shāh Waliullah in 1179/1765. Within three years of his death the East India Company grabbed the *diwāni* rights over Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the Company was awarded the districts of Banaras and Ghazipur as its jāgir (fief)

and the Mughal Emperor Shāh 'Ālam II was left only with the province of Allahabad and the pension allowed to him by the Company. An announcement dated 8th March, 1787/28th Jamādi-ul-Ākhir, 1201 in the Calcutta Gazette reads. "The Muslim rule has rendered itself ignoble and nondescript while we have nothing to fear from the Hindus" The British forces defeated Sirāj-ud-daula in the battle of Palssey in 1757 and then Shuj'a-ud- daula was vanquished at Baksar on 23rd October, 1764. In 1314/1799, the defeat of Tipu Sultān, who died fighting the British at Seringapatan, sealed the fate of Muslim rule in India. "India is our's today," said General Harris exultantly on finding the dead body of the late Sultan.[23]

Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz was engaged in teaching and preaching at Delhi but he had kept himself informed of the happenings in the far-flung parts of the country. He viewed these developments pragmatically and reached the conclusion that Britishers were the real enemies of whatever influence and prestige Indian Muslims still enjoyed in the country. One of his Arabic couplets points to the danger the British power was likely to pose even beyond the frontiers of Indian sub-continent. The Shāh had written:

I see these Britons, well-heeled,
Provoking sedition between Delhi and Kabul.

The Shāh was the first scholar, so far as we are aware, to declare India under an alien rule as the *dār-al-harab* (abode of war). His elucidation of the reasons for holding this view is indicative of his insight into Islamic jurisprudence as well as his courage and realism in forming an estimate of the then political situation in the country. In reply to a question whether India was to be deemed as *dār-ul Islām* (abode of Islam) or *dār-ul harab*, reproduced in the first volume of the *Fatāwa-i- 'Azīziah*, he wrote after giving an excerpt from the *Durr-al-Mukhtār*:

> "In this city (of Delhi) it is not the mandate of the Muslim ruler that is being enforced but the orders of the Christian administrators which are imposed without the least resistance. What the jurists deem as imposition of the orders of infidels consists of such

matters as administrative regulations, governance of the people, taxation, levy of duties on commercial goods and the infidels acting as judges and executives in awarding punishment to the offenders like thieves and robbers in accordance with their own laws. Although such rulers may not be interfering in the observance of certain Islamic practices such as Friday and *Id* prayers, *azān* and offering of kine sacrifice, the basic principle is that all these matters depend on their approval: we see the mosques being demolished at their will and no Muslim or (non-Muslim) *dhimmi*[24] can enter the city or its suburbs without obtaining their permission. They place no restriction on travellers and merchants entering the city in their own interest but the nobles like Shuj'ā-ul-Mulk and Vilāyti Begum cannot enter the city without their permission. The dominion of the Christians extends from Delhi to Calcutta and if they have not imposed their direct rule on certain peripheral regions like Hyderabad, Lucknow or Rampur, it is partly because they have not deemed it advisable to do so and partly owing to these States having already acquiesced to their domination "[25]

The antipathy of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz towards the British power gaining control over India is amply demonstrated by the letters of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, one of the Shāh's chief disciples, whom he had trained for carrying on his mission of reform and regeneration of the Indian Muslims. These letters were written by the Saiyid to the rulers and grandees to unite for evicting the alien rulers from India. In a letter addressed to Shāh Sulaimān, the ruler of Chitrāl, he wrote :

> "A larger part of India has providentially fallen under the subjection of the Christians and infidels who are resorting to suppression and tyranny."[26]

Another letter to Rājā Hindū Rāo, a minister of Gwalior, was even more explicit of his aims.

"You are fully aware that these strangers from across the oceans have become rulers of the world: these mere merchants have founded an empire ! They have degraded and debased the honour and hegemony of majestic sovereigns."[27]

The Saiyid wrote to Ghulām Haider Khān, a military officer of Gwalior:

"A greater part of India has passed into the hands of foreigners who have let loose a reign of terror everywhere by their high-handedness. The dominions of the Indian potentates have been wrecked....."[28]

Yet another letter addressed to Prince Kāmrān discloses the intention of the Saiyid in launching the *jihād* movement. In this letter he had written:

"After accomplishing the end of this expedition (of the frontier and Punjab), this humble self alongwith his followers will turn his attention to India, for that is the ultimate objective of our endeavours."[29]

These aspirations of the Shāh are also revealed by the fact that Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd joined the service of Nawāb Amir Khān in 1227/1812 who was then trying to consolidate his power. Courageous as well as ambitious, Amir Khān possessed the qualities of conquerers and founders of empires but he needed an objective nobler than personal aggrandizement to evict the alien usurpers from the country.[30] Although there is nothing on record to show that the Saiyid had joined Nawāb Amir Khān's army on the direction of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, but the circumstances do suggest that the Saiyid had taken this step with the consent of his spiritual guide. When in 1333/1817 Amir Khān agreed to sign a treaty with the British in return for the small principality of Tonk, the Saiyid parted company with Amir Khān and wrote to Shāh 'Abdul 'Aziz: "All has been ruined: the Nawāb has gone over to the British. Now I cannot live here."[31] It is also significant that the Saiyid had met Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz before proceeding to Central India to join Amir Khān. Similarly, he had deemed it necessary to inform the Shāh before making his

adieus to Amīr Khān.

Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz had thus the foresight to perceive the impending danger to the freedom of the country and its consequences for Indian Muslims. He also did whatever was possible for him in the circumstances he was placed: it was his uucompromising antagonism towards the British which had initiated the *jihad* movement headed by Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, his spiritual disciple, and Shāh Ismāil Shahīd, his nephew. It was this spirit of the Shāh which also inspired Wilāyat Ali Azīmābādi, Yahyā 'Ali Sādiqpūri, Ahmadullah and 'Abdullah to continue the armed struggle against the British power in the north-west of India in most adverse circumstances. This great movement of reform and regeneration of Islam, the like of which had never been witnessed earlier in this country, provided a number of leaders like Liāqat 'Ali of Allahabad, Ahmad Ullah Shāh of Madras, Haji Imdād Ullah Thānwi and Hāfiz Zamīn Shahīd in the uprising of 1857 and continued to inspire the religious scholars who actively participated in the struggle for freedom of the country up to 1947.[38]

Training of future Leaders

The success of any reformer depends, to a large extent, on the guidance and training of future leaders who may be able to carry on his mission even in the changed circumstances without compromising the basic ideas and values of the founder of that movement. It was perhaps the will of God that Shāh 'Abdul Azīz excelled many a spiritual guides and his own predecessors even though some of his disciples appear to have attained even greater spiritual perfection than him. Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz was destined to guide several men of vaulting ambition who revolutionised the lives of millions during the next hundred years.

Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd.

The achievements of the Shāh's chief disciple Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd (1201-1246/1786-1831) are alone sufficient to demonstrate the role played by his reformist movement in the making of

present day Islam in the Indo-Pak subcontinent. The unprecedented popular enthusiasm generated by the Saiyid for reverting back to the original Islam, with closest proximity to the manners and morals of the holy Prophet, remains unparallel in medieval Islam. We also do not find people, in such large numbers, who, following the lead of Saiyid, were not only fighters for the cause of God but also mentors of creed and morals and who exerted such a salubrious influence on the coming generations. The Saiyid was not only the first man in this sub-continent to arouse the masses for armed resistance to the alien rule, he also warned the neighbouring Muslim countries of the gathering storm, and established a truly Islamic State on the pattern of right-guided Caliphate. It would be no exaggeration to claim that those associated with the Saiyid's movement were the pioneers of India's freedom struggle. Popularisation of religious knowledge through translations and composition of tracts in the languages spoken by the people was due mainly to scholars who followed the path shown by the Saiyid.[33] The religious, social and political awakening witnessed subsequently among the Muslims was, directly or indirectly, the result of gigantic endeavours made by the Saiyid and his followers which did not leave untouched the language and literature and ideas and ideals of the Indian Muslims who gradually became conscious of the need for social reforms and givingup un-Islamic rites and customs that had been adopted by them.

The tremendous religious emotion, both in its depth and range, stirred by the Saiyid in the masses has been attested by several eminent scholars. We cite here the observations of only a few of these.

Nawāb Siddiq Hasan Khān of Bhopal (d. 1307/1889), the noted Arabist and scholar, had been a witness to the efficacy of the Saiyid's guidance of his disciples and contemporaries. He writes in the *Tiqsār o-Juyūd-al-Ahrār* that :

> "A sign of God he was in guiding the people on the right path and making their hearts incline towards God. A large number of these became pure-hearted saints

through the potent influence exerted by him, while his spiritual successors sweeped the country clean of all unsound innovations and polytheistic thoughts and practices. He called the people back to the path of Qur'ān and *sunnah* and one can still see the influence of his sermons."[34]

He says further :

"In short, there was none so godly and perfect in spirit in the whole world in those days, nor was there any mystic or religious scholar who exerted such a salutary influence even over one-tenth of the people as he did."[35]

Another illustrious scholar, Maulana Haider 'Ali Rāmpūri (d. 1273/1856), who had the honour of being a student of Shāh 'Abdul 'Aziz has paid glowing tributes to the Saiyid in his *Siyānat-un-nās.*

"The sun of the Saiyid's guidance illuminated the lands and hearts of the people, crowds flocked to repent of their sins at his hands and to take the righteous path of the Qur'ān and *sunnāh* during his travels undertaken through different regions to teach the right way of following the faith of Muhammad. Those who had been blessed with understanding were helped by God to take the path shown by him."[36]

'Abdul Ahad was another scholar who had had the opportunity of meeting quite a large number of the Saiyid's disciples or those who and seen him. He says :-

"More than forty thousand Hindus or other non-believers embraced Islam on his hands while three million Muslims took oath of fealty to him. If all those who pledged obedience to the Saiyid's spiritual disciples were also taken into account, the number would exceed tens of millions,"[37]

Maulana 'Abdul Hai Budhānwi and Maulana Muhammad Ismāil Shahīd.

Two of the talented disciples and close relations of Shāh

'Abdul 'Aziz were Maulana 'Abdul Hai Budhānwi and Maulana Muhammad Ismāil Shahīd. The Shāh also acknowledged their learning for in one of his letters he greeted them as the 'crown of exegetes, pride of traditionists and the first among researchers.' In the same letter he wrote :

> "Both these are in no way inferior to this humble self in exegesis, traditions, law and jurisprudence, logic and other branches of learning. I find myself incapable of thanking God for the grace bestowed on them. You should regard them as God-blessed scholars and refer to them matters found insoluable by you."[38]

Other scholars of the time too, held Maulana 'Abdul Hai as a specialist in rational sciences while the Shāh considered him as the foremost among his disciples in so far as the exegesis of the Qurān was concerned. The Shāh often remarked that Maulana 'Abdul Hai was as learned as he himself was. The Shāh even paid him the well deserved compliment by addressing him as *Shaikh ul-Islām*, a title sparingly used for the most celebrated scholar of a time.

In sincerity and God-consciousness Maulana 'Abdul Hai surpassed his erudition and intelligence. He took oath of fealty to the Saiyid although the latter was younger to him and had even been his student. He left all of his literary pursuits to follow the guidance of the Saiyid on the path of spirit and *jihād*, devoted his energies and talents to further the mission of his spiritual mentor and ultimately died fighting in the way of God.

Gifted with the qualities of courage and ambition to the same extent as he was a man of intellect, Maulana Muhammad Ismāil could be described as one of those master minds who are born after centuries. A man of unusual brilliance, he was capable of making addition to any branch of learning. Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz once addressed him in a letter with the title of 'Testimony of God' (*Hujjat-ul-Islām*). His writings show the same freshness, vigour, eloquence and contemplation on the Qur'ān and *hadith* which characterize the works of Shāh Waliullah.[39]

A distinguishing feature of Maulana Muhammad Ismā'il was that instead of keeping step with the scholars of his time who had limited their activities to purely intellectual and literary pursuits, he chose to act as a pioneer in the field of social and religious reformation. His work entitled *'Taqwiyat-al-Imān'* proved uniquely successful in propagating puritanical creed among the masses. It did the job which could have hardly been accompalished by any governmental effort. Maulana Rashīd Ahmad Gangohi testifies that more than two hundred thousand persons had reformed their creed during the life-time of Muhammad Ismā'il and nobody knows how many people have benefitted thereafter from him.

Shāh Muhammad Ismā'il's zeal for reformation and revivalism sharpened by the Saiyid's guidance, prepared him to fight for the cause of God though his tongue, pen and arms, as the chief lieutenant of his *murshid* or the spiritual guide, and ultimately he laid down his life in the battle of Bālākot. Iqbāl has correctly depicted his accomplishments in one of his quartains in which he says :

Often they bank upon eloquence and arguments,
Often they take up the sword and lance for the right cause.
Chain armour they don sometimes beneath the garb,
Diverse are the means employed, for lovers they are.

Maulana Shāh Mūhammad Is'hāq and Shāh Muhammad Y'aqūb.

In so far as the teaching of religious sciences particularly *hadīth* is concerned, the place of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz was taken by his two grandsons Shāh Muhammad Is'haq (1197-1262/1783-1846) and Shāh Muhammad Y'aqūb (1200-1282/1786-1865). Both were sons of Shāh Muhammad Afzal, a son-in-law of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. The Shāh had nominated Shāh Muhammad Is'haq as his successor and transferred all his books, house etc., to him. Shāh Muhammad Is'hāq continued to teach in the Shāh's seminary at Delhi from 1239/1824 to 1258/1842 and then at Makkah Mukarramah, where he had migrated, until his death.

Being an erudite scholar of *hadīth*, he attracted a large number of students including scholars like Shaikh 'Abdullah Sirāj Makki. Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz often used to thank God for providing him such successors as Shah Mohammad Ismā'il and Shāh Muhammad Is'hāq and also often recited the Quranic verse: *Praise be to Allah who hath given me, in my old age, Isma'il and Is'hāq.*[40] Shāh Muhammad Is'hāq died at Makkah Mukarramah on 27 Rajab 1262/5 July, 1846 and was buried near the grave of Saiyyada Khadīja.[41]

Shāh Muhammad Y'aqūb also taught at Delhi for a considerable length of time but migrated to Makkah Mukarramah alongwith his brother Shāh Muhammad Is'hāq. He had among his students such luminaries as Nawāb Saiyid Siddīq Hasan Khān of Bhopal.[42] Maulana Khwāja Ahmad Husain of Nasirābād[43] and several others. He died at Makkah Mukarramah on Friday, 27, Dhi Q'ada 1282/9 April 1866 and was buried in the Jannat-ul-Mu'allah cemetery.

Other Discip es

A number of the Shāh's disciples later became learned scholars who established their own seminaries for teaching religious branches of learning. They infused a new life in the system of religious education. A few of those known for the depth of their learning or as successful pedagogues are mentioned here.

1. Maulana Mufti Ilāhi Bakhsh Kāndalwi
2. Maulana Imām-ud-dīn Dehlavi.
3. Maulana Haider 'Ali Rāmpūri (originally belonging to Tonk).
4. Maulana Haider 'Ali Faizābādi, author of *Muntahi-al-Kalām.*
5. Maulana Rashīd-ud-dīn Dehlavi.
6. Mufti Sadr-ud-dīn Dehlavi.

All these men of learning as well as those mentioned earlier had also been initiated by the Shāh in his mystic order. They not only carried on the torch of learning lit by the Shāh but also

reformed the lives of innumerable people by providing spiritual guidance to them. It can therefore be claimed that the thirteenth century of Hijrah was the era of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz's teachings and preachings. *This is a grace from Allah who grants it o whomsoever He likes.*

Having narrated the achievements of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, his sons and successors, who formed the core of Shāh Waliullah's movement for rejuvenation of Islam in India, it seems appropriate to give a brief account of his two other sons and three renowned spiritual successors, namely, Shāh Raf'ī-ud-din, Shāh 'Abdul Qādir, Shāh Muhammad 'Āshiq Phulti, Khwāja Muhammad Amīn Kāshmīri and Saiyid Shāh Abū Sa'eed Hasani of Rae Bareli. The details given here have been drawn from the seventh volume of *Nuzhatul Khwātir.*

Shāh Rāf'i-ud-din.

Shāh Raf'ī-ud-din 'Abdul Wahhāb, another son of Shāh Waliullah was younger to Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. He attained fame and prestige as a traditionist, theologian and logician He received education under the care of his elder brother and was initiated in the path of mysticism by Shāh Muhammad 'Āshiq Phulti. Being precocious, he started teaching and giving juristic opinion at the age of twenty years. He had also penned several works and after Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz became partially blind he took up the responsibility of teaching in his father's seminary. Several scholars have acknowledged his forte and paid tributes to his literary creations. In a letter addressed to Shaikh Ahmad bin Muhammad Sherwāni, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz wrote about Shāh Raf'i-ud-din.

> "Now my brother manages all affairs. Though younger to me, he has attained an equal proficiency in all the arts and sciences. God Almighty provided me the opportunity of bringing him up and thus honoured me with His grace. On his return to Delhi after a brief excursion, he presented me a brief yet valuable brochure discussing unique issues not touched earlier

by anyone. This consists of his matchless commentary of the *Sūrat-un-Nūr* and its underlying wisdom. I can say with full confidence that in this remarkable work he has succeeded in elucidating the gist and drift of the *Sūrah* in an inimitable manner which can illuminate the hearts."

Another scholar Shaikh Muhsin bin Yāhya Turhati writes in the *Al-Yān'e al-Janī* :

"Apart from the disciplines prevalent in his days the Shāh had gained a mastery of the branches of learning pursued by the ancients which is seldom the case with other academicians. His works are extremely elegent—I have seen some of his profound works which can be appreciated only by the learned scholars. He summarises divers facts in a few words which speak of his depth of knowledge and intelligence. His book, the *Damgh-al-Bātil* discusses certain intricate issues pertaining to metaphysics which have been acclaimed by the specialists while his another brochure demonstrates how love pervades everything. This tract is entitled *Asrār-al-Mahibbah*. There would be few persons who have written any thing on the subject and, as I think, only two philosophers Abu Nasr Farābi and Bu' Ali Sīnā have works on this topic. Nasīr-ud-din Tūsi has made a mention of these in his certain works."

In addition to the books mentioned by Shaikh Muhsin. Shāh Raf'i-ud-din wrote many other treatises. These were on prosody, historiography, the Prophet's miracle of splitting the moon. refutation of philosophical postulates in accordance with its own principles reality of colours, indications of the Doomsday, evidences of unicity, science of counting on fingers, public affairs and commentaries on *Arba'yn Kāfāt* and *Risāla Mīr Zāhid*. He also wrote several works on literary topics. One of these was entitled *Takmil al-Sanā'a* and in another he added verses to his father's couplets with the same length and rhyme. He

composed several odes in Arabic. one of which was in reply to Bu 'Ali Sīnā's *'Ayeniah* which shows his command over the language.

He died on 6 Shawwal 1233/9 August 1818 while his elder brother Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz was still alive. He was buried in the suburbs of Delhi near the grave of his father.

Shāh 'Abdul Qādir

A scholar like his brothers, Shāh 'Abdul Qādir was known for his piety and spiritual perfection. After the death of his father, when he was still a child he was taught by his brother Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz and was guided on the path of spirit by Shāh 'Abdul 'Adl Dehlavi. Being extremely courteous and always willing to help others he had become very popular among the masses who flocked to him for intellectual, religious and literary guidance.

Shāh 'Abdul Qādir resided in the Akbarābādi mosque where he imparted education to the students Those prominent among his disciples were Maulana 'Abdul Ha'i (son of Hibbat Ullah Budhānawi), Maulana Muhammad Ismā'il (son of Shāh 'Abdul Ghani, his younger brother), Maulana Fadl-i-Haq (son of Fadl-i-Imām of Khairābād), Mirza Hasan 'Ali Shāf'ī Lakhnavi, Shāh Ishāq (son of Shāh Afzal Umari Dehlavi), Maulana Syed Mahboob 'Ali Ja'fri, Maulana Saiyid Is'hāq[44] (son of Saiyid 'Irfān of Rae Bareli) and several others.

Shāh 'Abdul Qādir's Urdu translation of the Qur'ān is a monumental contribution, a miraculous work of exact rendering in a simple and idiomatic language. Maulana 'Abdul Ha'i has written in the *Mehr-i-Jahān Tāb* that Shāh Abdul Qādir once dreamt of the Qur'ān being revealed to him. When he informed Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz about it, the latter told him that the dream was authentic, but as revelation had ceased after the last Prophet, he would serve the Qur'ān in some unique manner. The interpretation of the dream by Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz ultimately took the shape of *Mūzeh-al-Qur'ān*.

Shāh 'Abdul Haq's Urdu rendering is marvellously simple

yet accurate which follows the drift and content of the text. That the Shāh was able to accomplish this task was a grace of God bestowed on the chosen few[45]. I have had the honour of hearing the recitation of *Mūzeh-al-Qur'ān* from my maternal grandmother Saiyida Hamīra (daughter of Shāh 'Alam-ul-Huda Hasani Nasīrābādi) who had been tutored by the daughter of Shāh 'Abdul Qādir.

Shāh 'Abdul Qādir died on Wednesday, 19 Rajab, 1230/27 June 1815. His elder brothers Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz and Shāh Raf'i-ud-din were still alive who would have, naturally, been most grief-striken. While burying the dead body of Shāh 'Abdul Qādir they were heard saying, "We are not burying an individual but an epitome of learning and gnosticism."

Shāh Waliullah had four sons from his second wife Irādat Khātoon, the daughter of Saiyid Thanāullah of Sonipat. Shāh 'Abdul Azīz was the eldest followed by Shāh Raf'i-ud-din, Shāh 'Abdul Qādir and Shāh 'Abdul Ghani. It was strange that they left this fleeting world in a reverse order. All the four were eminent scholars of their time as well as guides to the people on the path of righteousness, though Shāh 'Abdul Ghani could not make the mark like his brothers owing to his death at an early age. However, his son Maulana Muhammad Ismā'il Shahīd was enabled by God to make good the loss on behalf of his father.

Shāh Muhammad 'Āshiq Phulti

Shāh Muhammad 'Āshiq (son of 'Ubaid Ullah bin Muhammad of Phulat) was a talented scholar. A progeny of Muhammad bin Abu Bakr Siddiq, with 21 intervening descendents, he was the son of Shāh Waliullah's father's sister. After completing his preliminary education he was instructed by Shāh Waliullah with whom he went to Hijaz in 1143/1730 where he studied under certain esteemed teachers at Makkah Mukarramah and Madina Munawwarah, the most celebrated among whom was Shaikh Abu Tāhir Muhammad bin Ibrāhīm Kurdi Madani. He was awarded a certificate of proficiency by Shaikh bu Tāhir in *hadīth*.

Shāh Muhammad 'Āshiq was the most outstanding scholar among Shāh Waliullah's comrades. He was also a bosom friend of the Shāh. Shaikh Abu Tāhir had, in the certificate awarded by him to Shāh Muhammad 'Āshiq written that he was a replica of Shāh Waliullah's morals and literary attainments. Shāh Waliullah had also composed verses praising the erudition of Shāh Muhammad 'Āshiq.

A large number of persons including Shāh 'Abdul 'Āzīz, his brother Shāh Raf'i-ud-din and Saiyid Abu Sa'eed of Rae Bareli were taught by him. He wrote a detailed work on *tasawwuf* (mysticism) under the title of *Sabīl-al-Rishād, Al-Qaul al-Jali fi Manaqib al-Wali* giving the biographical details of Shāh Waliullah, and two commentaries *Duā-i-Aḥtasām* and *Tabyīdh al-Musaffā Sharh-al-Muwattā* on the works of Shāh Waliullah. He died in 1187/1773 (as mentioned in a letter written by Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz to Saiyid Abu Sa'eed Rae Barelvi).

Khwāja Muhammad Amīn Kāshmīri

Khwājā Muhammad Amīn was one of those four disciples and spiritual successors of Shāh Waliullah who are said to have propagated the Shāh's teachings.[46] Maulana Saiyid 'Abdul Ha'i writes about him in the *Nuzhatul Khawātir* that hailing from Kashmir, he had settled down in Delhi. Being one of the prominent and favourite students of Shāh Waliullah, he used to add *Waliullāhi* to his name and was also known by that appellation. That after his father's death Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz completed his education under him, as stated by the Shāh in the *'Ujāla-i-Nāfiah*, and that Shāh Waliullah wrote certain treatises especially for him are sufficient to indicate the place of honour enjoyed by him, It appears from a letter written by Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz to Shāh Abu Sa'eed of Rae Bareli that Khwāja Muhammad Amīn died near-about 1187/1773. This letter reached Rae Bareli after Saiyid Shāh Abu Sa'eed had left for Hijaz to perform the *haj* in Rabi-ul-Awwal, 1187 May-June, 1773 and thus it was received by him on return from the *haj* in 1188/1774.[47]

The *Kalamāt-i-Tayyabāt*, a collection of Shāh Waliullah's

letters, has four letters addressed to Khwāja Muhammad Amīn on intricae metaphysical issues.[48]

The Shāh had several other disciples who later became prominent scholars, but their biographical accounts in any detail are unfortunately not available. One such student intimate with the Shāh was Hāfiz 'Abdun Nabi alias 'Abdur Rahmān.[49]

Shāh Abu Sa'eed Hasani Rae Barelvi

Saiyid Abu Sa'eed (bin Muhammad Zīā bin Āyat Ullah bin Shaikh 'Alam Ullah Naqshbandi was a saint among the scholars. Born in Rae Bareli, he received education from Mulla 'Abdullah of Amethi and was then initiated in the mystic order by his uncle Saiyid Muhammad Sābir bin Āyat Ullah Naqshbandi. After treading the path of spirit for several years, he went to Delhi to sit at the feet of Shāh Waliullah. He chose Shaikh Muhammad Āshiq as his spiritual guide after the death of Shāh Waliullah. In the authorisation certificate issued to him by Shaikh Muhammad Āshiq, he wrote :

> "Mīr Abu Sa'eed, a God-fearing and virtuous Saiyid who deserves our praise, had kept the company of my Shaikh and been steadfast on the mystic practices taught to him by the Shaikh. With the special attention of the Shaikh he had attained the stage of *Shahūd* (manifestation) wherein the esoteric realities are laid bare to the mystics and which is the ultimate aim of the travellers on the path of spirit."

Shaikh Muhammad 'Āshiq further says :

> "When our revered Shaikh departed for the paradise, Mīr Abu Sa'eed thought of learning the remaining practices of Naqshbandiyah, Qādiriyah, Chishtiyah and other mystic orders from this humble self. In view of his keenness and also being fearful of the holy Prophet's *hadith* forbidding concealment of knowledge, I helped him and taught him the observances of the *sūfis*, and when I witnessed those signs of grace and beatitude which indicated his

perfection, I allowed him after divination through prayer, to guide others desirous of being led on the path of spirit. He had taken oath *(bay'at)* after the manner of all the mystic orders and was invested with the garb of mendicants, as my own Shaikh had bestowed on me. It was in accordance with the custom followed by our predecessors since the time of Shaikh 'Ubaid Ullah. I have also accorded him permission to teach exegesis, *hadith*, *fiqh* and *tassawwuf* (on the condition that he continues his studies) as well as grammar and rhetorics. He has also been permitted to give away amulets for seemly purposes and practise the disciplines of the mystics specified in the *Al-Qaul al-Jamil-fi-Bayan-i-Sawa-is-Sabil* and *Al-Intibah fi-Salasil auliā-Allāh.*"

Saiyid Shāh Abu Sa'eed was serious-looking yet very compassionate and hospitable; he was ever willing to go to any length to help the poor. He undertook a journey to Hijaz, reached Makkah Mukarramah on 28 Rabi-ul-Awwal 1178/19 June 1773 and proceeded to Medina Munawwarah after performing the *haj*, where he stayed for six months and studied the *Masabih* under Shaikh Abul Hasan Sindhi. Once, when he was sitting near the grave of the holy Prophet, he saw the Prophet coming out of his closet. First he saw his back and then the Prophet turned towards him with a smile on his lips. Saiyid Abu Sa'eed's spiritual successor Shaikh Amin bin Hamid 'Alvi of Kākori says in one of the tracts written by him; "Shaikh Abu Sa'eed told me that he saw the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) at Medina with his own eyes." Thereafter he returned to Makkah Mukarramah where he took lessons in the *Jazriyah* from Shaikh Muhammad Mir Dad Ansari. He returned to India by way of Madras where he halted for a considerable time. A number of persons were initiated by him in his order at Madras the notable amongst them being Al-Haj Amin-ud-din Kākorvi (son of Hamid-ud-din), Maulana 'Abdul Qadir Khan Khalispuri, Mir 'Abdus Salam Badakhshi, Maulana Jamal-ud-din

(son of Muhammad Siddiq Qutb), Maulana 'Abdullah Afandi and Shaikh 'Abdul Latīf Husaini Misri. Shāh Abu Sa'eed Hasani died on 9 Ramadhan 1193/20 November, 1779 at Rae Bareli and was buried there.[50]

Shaikh 'Abdul Wahhāb-A Contemporary Reformer

The great reformer and founder of puritanical movement, Shaikh Muhammad bin 'Abdul Wahhāb bin Sulaimān al-Tamīmi al-Hanbali (1115-1206/1703/1792) of Hijaz was a contemporary of Shāh Waliullah.[51] He remained alive thirty years after the Shāh was dead. Although contemporaneous and their teachings having several similar features, there is nothing to suggest that they ever met one another. Shāh Waliullah went for the *haj* pilgrimage in 1143/1731 and remained in Hijaz for more than a year. This was the initial period of Shaikh Muhammad bin 'Abdul Wahhāb's reformatory endeavours and his preachings were, at that time, confined to 'Yuaynah and Dari'yah. By that time neither Amīr Muhammad bin Sa'ūd had taken an oath of allegiance to the Shaikh nor they had entered into any agreement (for propagation of the puritanical movement and establishment of a government to achieve that end). This pact was made in 1158/1745 which, on the one hand, made Dari'yah the centre of the Shaikh's movement of reform enjoying state support and thereby paved the way for its gaining strength and influence, on the other. It was this agreement which ultimately led to the conquest of Makkah Mukarramah by the successor of Amir Muhammad bin Sa'ūd in 1218/1803 (twelve years after the death of the Shaikh and forty-two years after Shāh Waliullah's death).[52]

The central point of the puritanical movement of Shaikh Muhammad bin 'Abdul Wahhāb was to call the people back to the worship of one and only God, rejection of polytheism in any shape or form, eradication of unreceived customs and rites (which had come into vogue among certain tribes in the eastern part of Arabia owing to illiteracy of the people and their indifference to scholars), elaboration of the difference between Divine Unity (*Tauhid-i-Ulūhiyat*) and Divine Providence

(*Tauhīd-i-Rabūbiyat*) and its implications in regard to worship of God in the light of Quranic injunctions and clarifications.[53] The success achieved by Shaikh Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab in his reformatory endeavour is remarkable in comparison to that of earlier reformers, although, as Dr. Ahmad Amin points out, it was due to the patronage of the State which came into existence through this movement and later wholeheartedly supported it.[54] Be that as it may, there can be no denying the fact that the Shaikh played the role of a revolutionary reformer, and even if one may not completely agree with the Shaikh's thought and the manner he presented them, the need of such a movement at that time and the salubrious influence it has had on the people cannot be disputed.

The thoughts and convictions of Shāh Waliullah and Shaikh Muhammad bin 'Abdul Wahhāb in regard to Divine Unicity, its elaboration in the light of the Quranic verses and the distinction between Divine Unity and Divine Providence indicate a great deal of similarity. It was because both had delved deep into the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*. There was nothing exceptional in this closeness of ideas since several other thinker-scholars like Shaikh-ul Islam Ibn Taimiyah had, in their own times, arrived at analogous conclusions for discrediting polytheistic beliefs and practices and propagation of pure and unalloyed *tauhīd*.

However, the range of Shāh Waliullah's intellectual and reformative endeavour was much wider for it covered the areas of regeneration of Islamic branches of learning as well as Islamic thought, elucidation of the wisdom underlying the injunctions of *shari'ah* and their integration with the teachings of Islam, criticism of blind adherence to the juristic school of one's ancestors, harmonization of reason and religious thought and coordination of different juristic thoughts. He also tried to arrest the decline of Muslim political power in India. His other achievements were propagation of the study of *hadith* and providing guidance to the people in the mystic path of *ihsān* so that they could carry ahead his mission. In the words of poet Iqbāl Shāh Waliullah was like the sweet and placid stream of *zamzam*

(symbolizing love and its sweetness) in the wilderness of Hijaz (uncomprising faith in Oneness of God). The upbringing of the Shāh in an atmosphere permeated with mysticim was perhaps responsible for combining these two qualities in him which are demonstrated by his eulogies of the Prophet and other poetical compositions. Viewed in this context it would perhaps be more fruitful to make a comparative study of the similarities and divergencies in the thoughts of Shāh Waliullah and Shaikh-ul-Islām Ibn Taimiyah than to look for these between the Shāh and Shaikh Muhammad 'Abdul Wahhāb. In truth and reality the Shāh and Shaikh-ul-Islam bear a close resemblance in so far as their depth of knowledge, capacity of arriving at independent conclusions in juristic matters on the basis of the Qur'ān and *sunnah*, breadth of vision and brilliance are concerned (as already alluded to at various places in the foregoing pages). If there were some differences between the two, these were chiefly owing to different circumstances, system of education, remoteness of time and space and, lastly, the esoteric path of spirit the two had chosen to tread.

Notes and References:

1. Sons of the Mujaddid, other than these four, died in infancy.
2. *Meaning*, protector prince of faith.
3. Shāh Waliullah had another son Shaikh Muhammad from his first wife who died soon after the death of the Shāh at the age of twenty-five years.
4. Shāh Ismā'il Shahīd was thes on of Shāh 'Abdul Ghani. All the four sons of the Shāh, namely, Shāh 'Abdul 'Āziz, Shāh Raf'i-ud-din, Shāh 'Abdul Qādir and Shāh 'Abdul Ghani achieved eminence after the death of their father. Their deaths occured in a reverse order, viz., the youngest among them (Shāh 'Abdul Ghani) died in 1227/1812, then Shāh 'Abdul Qādir who was elder than him in 1230/1815, Shāh Raf'i-ud-din in 1232/1818 and then Shāh 'Abdul 'Āziz, the eldest one, in 1239/1824.
5. The bold erect writing in which the Qur'ān is usually inscribed. Modern Arabic hand-written works are generally in *naskh*,

6. Another style of Arabic writing.
7. Shāh 'Abdul 'Āziz was known for his deep insight in to the Hanafite *fiqh* and, according to some, he had an edge in this matter even on Shāh Waliullah.
8. The work shows extensive knowledge of the Shāh in this branch of learning.
9. The Arabic lyrics of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, particularly his ode known as *qasīda-i-lāmiyah*, reproduced in the *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, shows his exquisite artistry surpassing even his father Shāh Waliullah. The spontantity and ease of expression, a quality normally found in the poets composing in their mother tongue, is the chief characteristic of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz's lyrics. A similar mastery over Arabic is to be found in the works of Mufti Sadr-ud-din Khān, a pupil of the Shāh. See Maulānā 'Abdul Hai's *As-Thaqāfat al-Islāmiyah fil-Hind* and *Nuzhatul Khawātir*.
10. *Malfuzāt Shāh 'Abdul 'Aziz*, p. 10.
11. In the old curriculum of Arabic madrasas the exegesis of the second chapter (Sūrat-ul-Baqarah) from *Jalālain* and *Baiwādi* only was included. The exegesis of the entire Qur'ān was then not a part of the syllabus.
12. The introduction to the work by the Shāh (page 3) shows that he had taken up the work at the instance of his brother Maulānā Muhammad in 1208/1794 in order to continue the mission of his father.
13. First few pages of this work are, however, missing.
14. *Maqālāt-i-Tarīqat*, (Alias *Fazā'il 'Azīzia*) Hyderabad, 1292 A. H. p. 33.
15. Q. 2 : 173
16. Q. 2 : 102
17. The six most authentic works on *hadīth*.
18. Maulānā Hakīm 'Abdul Hai's *As-Thaqāfat al-Islāmia fil-Hind* (a Urdu version, *Islami Uloom wa Fanoon Hindustan Men*, Darul Musannifin, Azamgarh) gives the details of amazing number of glosses written on the two books specially the *Sullum-al-Uloom*.
19. Parts of this work were printed in Lucknow and Ludhiana.
20. Nawāb Najaf 'Ali Khān had an undisputed control over the administration of Delhi. He was anti-Sunni and openly favoured Shi'as. Even if the reports about his oppressive behaviour towards the Sunnis are deemed to be exaggerated, the fact remains that the

Shāh instead of attributing the *Tuhfa* to his proper name, referred himself as Ghulām Halīm—his chronogrammatic name—to conceal his identity. Similarly he refers to his father as Shaikh Qutb-ud-din and his grandfather as Shaikh Abul Faidh.

21. Shāh 'Abdul 'Aziz, *Tuhfa-i-Athna 'Ashariyya*, Newal Kishore Press, Lucknow (1325 A. H.), p. 2,

22. An illusion to the sword of Caliph 'Ali.

23. Mahmūd Khān Banglori, *Tārikh Saltanat Khudādād*, Banglore, 1934, p. 266.

24. A non-Muslim citizen of an Islamic State i. e., one whom an Islamic State is obliged to afford protection.

25. Shāh 'Abdul 'Aziz, *Fatāwā 'Azizi*, Vol. I, Mujta'bā'i Press, Delhi. p. 114.

26. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Seerat Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, Vol. 1, Lucknow 1975, p. 389.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 125

28. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

29. *Seerat Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 390.

30. See the chapter 'Sojourn with Nawab Amir Khan' in Mohiuddin Ahmad's *Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd—His Life and Mission*. He had been deliberately besmirched by the British historians as a Pindari chief although his contemporaries like Sir John Molcolm are on record that the Pindaries joined Amīr Khān's forces only for a brief period in the hope of plunder, but fell off when their hopes were belied.

31. *Waqā'i Ahmadi*, (Nadwa MSS), p. 85,

32. For details see Mohiuddin Ahmad, *Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd—His Life and Mission*, Lucknow, 1975.

33. The earlier indifference to the varnacular in intellectual endeavours had resulted in creating a gulf between the faith and practice of Indian Muslims. The masses had become completely cut off from the Scripture and the *Sunnah* and their teachings.

34. Nawāb Siddiq Hasan Khan. *Tiqsār-o-Juyūd al-Ahrār*, Bhopal, 1298 A. H., p. 109.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 110.

36. Maulana Haider 'Ali, *Siyānat-un-Nās' an Waswasat al-Khannas*, 1270, A. H., p. 4.

37. There are many more evidences to this effect recorded in the

Sawāneh Ahmadi, In this connexion the statements of Maulana Wilāyat 'Ali and Maulana Karāmat 'Ali can be seen in the author's "*A Misunderstood Reformer.*" For a detailed account of the Saiyid's movement "*Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*" (4 volumes) by Ghulām Rasūl Mehr, "*Seerat Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*" by the writer of these lines and *Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd—His Life and Mission* by Mohiuddin Ahmad can be seen, The great reformatory work performed by the Saiyid's spiritual disciples has also been discribed in some detail in *Al-Zikr al-Jali fi Karōmat As-Saiyid Muhammad Ali* by Afsar-ud-daula Jān-i-Jahān Khān published from Sikandarabad in 1305/1888.

38. Letter to Munshi Khair-ud-din of Luckhow. Cited from *Seerat Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, op. cit*, Vol. I, pp. 216-17.

39. See *Mansab-i-Imāmat* by Shāh Muhammad Ismail.

40. Q. 14 : 39.

41 See *Nuzhatul Khawōtir*, Vol, VII for further details.

42. The interest taken by Nawāb Siddīq Hasan Khān, both as a scholar of *hadith* and a patron in the capacity of ruler of Bhopal, had made that State a centre for propagation of this branch of learning. He got *Fath-ul-Bōri* published, for the first time, from Egypt at a cost of Rs. 50,000/-.

43. Belonging to the family which gave birth to Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, Khwāja Ahmad Hasani was a scholar and *sūfi* with a large number of disciples. For details see the author's *Kārawān-i-Imān-o-'Azeemat*.

44. Elder brother of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd.

45. Shāh's 'Abdul Qādir's translation shows his mastery over Arabic and Urdu. Nobody in India has surpassed him and he excels at places even such scholars of Arabic rhetorics and lexicography as Zamakhshari and Raghīb Asfahāni. A literary taste of the highest order coupled with absolute sincerity and divine grace would have been required for such an accomplishment.

46. Maulana 'Ubaid-ullah Sindhi writes in the *Al-Tauhīd* : "Not more than four persons fully comprehended the political aims of the Shāh. These were (1) Shāh Muhammad 'Āshiq, (a cousin of the Shāh), (2) Jamāl-ud-din Shāh Muhammad 'Āmīn Waliullāhi Kāshmiri, (3) Shāh Nūrullah Budhānwi, and (4) Shāh Abu Sa'eed Rae Barelvi, (Also see 'Ubaidullah Sindhi's *Shāh Waliullah aur Unki Siyōsi Tahrīk*, pp. 173-747). Shāh Nūrullah Budhānwi, the fourth person mentioned by Maulana 'Ubaidullah Sindhi but not mentioned

among those described here, was one of the favourite students of Shāh Waliullah. He had made a name for himself as an outstanding scholar during the life-time of the Shāh. He was father-in-law and also a teacher of Shāh Abdul 'Azīz in *fiqh*. He died in 1187/1773. (*Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. VI).

47. *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. VI, p. 286.

48. *Kalamāt-i-Tuyyabāt*, pp. 161-167.

49. See the Article by Mas'ūd Anwar in *Burhān* monthly, September October, 1983 Issue.

50. Shāh Abu Sa'eed was maternal grandfather of the great reformer Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd. The letters addressed to him by Shāh Ahlullah (brother of Shāh Waliullah), Maulana Nūrullah, Shāh Muhammad 'Āshiq and Shāh Abdul 'Azīz speak of the esteem in which he was held by these persons as well as his intimacy with them for they refer to certain events and occurrences of personal interest. A collection of these letters, compiled by Maulvi Saiyid Abul Qāsim of Haswa under the title of *Maktūb-al-Ma'ārif* is available in our personal library. His cousin Maulana Saiyid Wāzeh was a spiritual successor of Shāh Waliullah. He had been duly permitted by the Shāh to guide others in the spiritual discipline. (Also see Osmania University manuscripts, *Maktūbāt-i-Qalmi*, No. 150).

51. Shāh Waliullah, born in 1114/1702, was elder to Shaikh 'Abdul Wahhāb by one year.

52. Further details can be seen in Mas'ūd Ālam Nadwi's *Muhammad bin 'Abdul Wahhāb, Ek Mazlūm aur Badnām Musleh* in Urdu. In Arabic there are a number of works on the subject.

53. The *Kitāb al-Tauhīd* by the Shaikh examines this issue in all its details.

54. See *Zu'ama-al-Islah fil Asr al-Hadith* (Chapter *Tarjuma* Shaikh Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab).

XII

Writings of Shah Waliullah

We are giving here a list of Shāh Waliullah's published and unpublished works in Arabic and Persian in an alphabetical order, with brief remarks about their subject matter.

(Alif)

1. *Arb'ain* (Arabic). A collection of 40 *ahādīth* which are brief yet of inclusive character. The collection was published by Matb'a Anwār Ahmadi, Lucknow in 1319/1901. Its Urdu translation by the pen of Khalīfa Saiyid 'Abdullah, a spiritual successor of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd, was brought out in 1554/1836 from Matb'a Ahmadi, Calcutta. Later on, another rendering by Maulana 'Abdul Mājid Daryabādi, with short comments was published in 1387/1967 as *Chahl Hadīth Waliullahi* or *Arb'ain Waliullahi* by several presses of India and Pakistan.

2. *Al-Irshād ila-Muhimmāt-i- Ilm-al-Isnād* (Arabic) is about the scholars of Hijaz who taught Shāh Waliullah. The brochure is available in a printed form.

3. *Izālat al-Khafa 'an Khilāfat al-Khulfā'* (Persian). Contents of the book have already been discussed earlier.

4. *Atayyab al-Naghm fi Madh-i-Saiyid al-'Arab wal-'Ajam* (Arabic). A collection of odes eulogizing the holy Prophet which speak of the Shāh's poetic talent and love for the Prophet. It was published by the Mujtabāyi Press, Delhi in 1308/1891.

5. *Altāf al-Quds* (Persian). Deals with esoteric principles of mysticism. It was published by Saiyid Zahīr-ud-din from Matb'a-i-Ahmadi.

6. *Al-Imdād-o-fi Ma'āthir al-Ajdād* (Persian). A brochure giving Shāh Waliullah's geneological table and containing brief notices about some of his ancestors. It forms part of *Anfās al-'Ārifīn* as well as *Majmu'a Khamsa Rasāil-i-Shāh Waliullah* published by Matb'a Ahmadi, Delhi.

7. *Al-Intibāh-o-fi Salāsil-i-Aulia' Allāh*[1] (Persian). Gives the history and a brief introduction of different mystic orders. It was published by Saiyid Zahīr-ud-din along with its Urdu translation from Matb'a Ahmadi in 1311/1893.

8. *Insān al-'Ain fi Mashāikh al-Haramayn* (Persian). The work has been mentioned earlier. It forms part both of *Anfās al-'Ārifīn* and *Majmu'a Khamsa Rasā'il-i-Shāh Waliullah.*

9. *Al-Insāf-o-fi Bayān-i-Asbāb al-Ikhtalāf* (Arabic). Contents of the brochure have been discussed earlier.

10. *Anfās-al-'Ārifīn* (Persian). The work has been discussed earlier. Published in 1335/1917 by the Mujtabayi Press, Delhi, it consists of the following seven tracts.

(1) *Bawāriq al-Wilāyah*
(2) *Shawāriq al-Ma'arifah*
(3) *Al-Imdādo-fi Ma'athir al-Ajdād*
(4) *An-Nabazata al-Ibrīziyato-fi-al-Latīfata al-'Azīziyata*
(5) *Al-Atiyatas Samadiyato fi-al-Anfās al-Muhammadiyah.*
(6) *Insān-al-'Ain fi-Mashā'ikh al-Haramayn.*
(7) *Al-Juz al-Latīf fi-Tarjamatil 'Abd al-Dhayīf.*

(Be)

11. *Al-Budūr al-Bazigha* (Arabic). This work on theology employs philosophical terminology in discussing human nature and social behaviour. Man's physical characteristics and ethical instincts as well as practical wisdom have been examined, in some detail, to show what guidance does the *shari'ah* provide for the establishment of a moral-spiritual society. The Shāh then goes on to explain the best way to organise a social order, the

principles of *khilāfah* (caliphate) and *imārah* (political leadership) and then passes on to the ways of attaining esoteric spiritual knowledge, significance of Divine names and their attributes, stages of spiritual ascent polytheism and its different forms and phases, evidences of the Day of Resurrection and the life beyond death, virtues of righteousness, marks of prophethood, different categories of the apostles of God and the modes of revelation to them. The Shāh also examines the basic characteristics of an Islamic community vis-a-vis pre-Islamic nations and the wisdom underlying the four religious observances enjoined by Islam.

The topics touched in this work are far in excess of those dealt with in the *Hujjat Allāh-al-Baligha* and it examines certain metaphysical and theological issues which have not been normally touched upon by other scholars. However, the *Hujjat* outshines this work because of the depth of knowledge and maturity of ideas as well as the Arabic idiom and diction displayed by the Shāh in that work. The book has been brought out by Majlis 'Ilmi, Dhabel in 1354/1935 from the Madina Press, Bijnor.

12. *Bawāriq al-Wilāyah* (Persian). The tract forms part of the *Anfās al-'Ārifin* in which the Shāh has described the life and spiritual attainments of his father Shāh Abdur Rahīm and given some of his aphorisms.

(Te)

13. *Tāwīl al-Ahādīth* (Arabic). It recounts the stories of different prophets mentioned in the Qur'ān in order to draw out lessons and rules of *shari'ah* from the Quranic descriptions. Though brief, it shows the Shāh's deep knowledge of the Qur'ān. The work was published by the Shāh Waliullah Academy, Hyderabad (Pakistan).

14. *Tuhfatul Muwahhidīn*. It is a Persian tract explaining the creed of *tauhīd*. First published by Afzalul Matābe, Delhi, Maulana Hāfiz Rahīm Bakhsh, the author of the *Hayāt-i-Wali*, brought out its Urdu rendering from Maktab'a Salfiyah, Lahore in 1381/1952. Other works of the Shāh do not contain any reference to it. Although the topic discussed in it is generally

comparable to that in other works of the Shāh, certain discordant views expressed in it have led some people to deny its authorship to the Shāh. God knows best.

15. *Tarājim-o-Abwāb al-Bukhāri* (Arabic), It expounds the principles which would be found helpful in understanding certain difficult portions of the Bukhāri. The tract was included in the *Majmu'a Rasā'il-i-Arb'ah* as well as the *Musalsalāt* published by Maṭb a Nūr-ul-Anwār, Arrah.

16. *At-Tafhīmāt al-Ilāhiyah* (Arabic and Persian). It is a mystical work, partly in Arabic and partly in Persian, giving the mystical experiences of the Shāh. The work, in two parts, is of the nature of a diary of esoteric feelings and experiences put into writing for one's close circle of friends and companions and not meant for publication. It was published by Madina Press, Madina by Majlis 'Ilmi, Dhābel in 1355/1936 in two parts. A very impressive and valuable portion of the work consists of the Shāh's exhortations to different classes of the then Muslim society.

(Jīm)

17. *Al-Juz al-Latīf fi-Tarjumata al-'Abd al-Dhayif* (Persian). Forms a part of *Anfās al-'Ārifīn*, which has also been published separately. It contains a brief autobiographical account and some reminiscences of the Shāh.

(He)

18. *Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha* (Arabic). The *magnum opus* of the Shāh which has been discussed in section seven of this work.

19 *Husn al-Aqīdah* (Arabic). The fundamental creed of Islam as accepted by the *Ahl-i-Sunnat* sect, has been expounded in this work in the light of the Qur'ān and the *hadīth*. A brief reference to its contents has already been made in section five. The work also known as *Al-'Aqidata al-Hasanah* has been published with a commentary by the late Maulana Muhammad Owais Nigrāmi under the title of *Al-Aqidata al-Sunniyah* from the Maktab'a Nadwatul 'Ulama, Lucknow and is included in the syllabus of the Darul Uloom, Nadwatul 'Ulama.

(Khe)

20. *Al-Khair al-Kathīr* (Arabic). This work on philosophy of religion elucidates the concept of *m'arifat* (gnosis) and wisdom of Divine Names, revelation etc. The Shāh has also discussed, from a philosophical angle, matters like *wahdat al-wajūd* (unity of being), *'arsh* (empyrean), *zamān-o-makān* (time and space), *aflāk-o-'anāsir* (vault of heaven and the constituent matters), *ma'dan* (minerals), *nabāt* (vegetation), *haiwān* (animal life), *ā'yān-i-thābita* (prototypes of things), *'ālam-i-mithāl* (sphere of similitude) etc.

The chapter *Khazānata-al-khāmisa* deals with prophethood, its characteristics and the distinguishing features of the prophets.

The book discusses various issues relating to physical world, mysticism and illuminist philosophy.

The section entitled *Khāzana-i-thālitha* gives the merits of the holy Prophet before he was endowed with the prophetic mission.

The chapter *Khazāna-i-thāmnah* gives a history of evolution of *sharī'ah*.

Khazāna-i-tāsi'ah discusses after-life and retribution of deeds.

Khazāna-i-'āshira deals with miscellaneous issues.

The book was published by Majlis Ilmi, Dhābel in 1352/1933.

(Dāl)

21. *Ad-Durrus Thamīn fi-Mubbashshirātil Nabī al-Amīn* (Arabic). It is a collection of glad tidings the Shāh and his ancestors had had from the holy Prophet. It was published with the *Musalsalāt* and *Al-Nawādir* in 1391/1970 by Kutub Khāna Yahyawi, Saharanpur.

22. *Diwān-o-Ash'ār* (Arabic). A collection of the Arabic verses of the Shāh, compiled by Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz and Shāh Raf'i-ud-din. The manuscript is available in the Nadwatul 'Ulama Library.

(Re)

23. *Risālah* was written in reply to certain mystical issues

raised by Shaikh 'Abdullah bin 'Abdul Bāqi, also known as Khwāja Khurd.

24 *Risālah Dānishmandi* (Persian). A valuable tract containing detailed directions in regard to methodology of teaching An Urdu rendering of this treatise by the pen of Prof. Muhammad Sarwar was published under the title *Ar-Rahīm* from Hyderabad (Sind) in September, 1964. Its Arabic rendering by Muhammad Akram Nadwi also appeared in Muharram 1403/October, 1982 issue of *Al-Ba'ath a'l-Islāmi* as *Usūl ad-Darāsata wat- T'alīm*.

(Ze)

25. *Zahrawayn*. A commentary on the *Surat-ul-Baqarah* and *Surah Āl-Imrān*, the second and third chapters of the Qur'ān.

(Sīn)

26. *Sat āt* (Persian). A work on mystical philosophy abounding with terminologies of philosophy and mysticism and elucidating the concept of *wahdat-al-wajūd* (unity of being). The Shāh also tries to solve the riddle of co-relation between the eternal and contingent in this work. It is meant for the use of those well-versed in ancient philosophy and also acquainted with the controversy in regard to the *wahdat-al-wajud*. The Shāh has also freely used the technical terms of medical and physical sciences, drawn his arguments from these disciplines and profoundly elucidated certain Quranic verses. He has thrown light on the different forms and nature of celestial instruction, freely used the term *shakhsh-i-akbar* (great personality), discussed divine guidance and prophethood and the different forms these assume and the various categories and shapes of divine epiphany. The tract consisting of 24 pages was first published by Saiyid Zahir-ud-din from the Matb'a Ahmadi. It was reprinted in 1939 by Maulvi Fazal Ahmad on behalf of Bait al-Hikmah, Karachi and then by Maulana Ghulām Mustafa Qāsmi in 1964 for the Shāh Waliullah Academy.

27. *Surūr al-Mahzūn* (Persian). It is a concise Persian

rendering of the *Kitāb Nūr al-'Uyūn fi Siyar il-Amīn al-Mamūn* a well known biography of the holy Prophet by Sayyid-an-Nās. The Shāh penned it at the instance of Mirza Mazhar Jān-i-Jānān, who was an eminent mystic of the Mujaddidyah order in his time. Several Urdu translations of it have since been published.

(Shīn)

28. *Sharh-o-Tarājim-i-Abwāb-i-Sahīh al-Bukhāri (Arabic)* is an annotation on certain chapters of the *Sahīh* of Bukhari. The work also includes the *Tarājim-i-Abwāb al-Bukhāri* and was published by Dā'iratul Ma'ārif, Hyderabad in 1323/1905.

29. *Shifa al-Qulūb* (Persian) is a tract on mysticism.

30. *Shawāriq al-Marifat* (Persian). A biography of the Shāh's uncle Shaikh Abdul Raza. It forms part of the *Anfās-al-'Ārifin* also.

('Āin)

31. *Al-'Atiyatus Samadiyah fi Anfās al-Muhammadiyah* (Persian). This small brochure contains a biographical sketch of the Shāh's maternal grand-father Shaikh Muhammad Phulti. It is included both in the *Anfās-al-'Ārfin* and the *Majmu'a Khamsa Rasā'il.*

32. *Iqd al-Jīd fi-Akhām al-Ijtihād wat-Tajdīd* (Arabic). The contents of this work have already been described in the sixth chapter.

(Fe)

33. *Fath-ur-Rahmān* (Persian). A translation of the Qur'ān already mentioned in the fifth chapter. It was published by Matab'a Farūqi. Delhi in 1294/1877 alongwith brief comments by Shāh Waliullah and Shāh 'Abdul Qadir's Urdu rendering of the scripture entitled *Muzeh-ul-Qur'ān.* It was first published from Calcutta.

34. *Fath al-Khabīr* (Arabic). A Glossary of the intricate words of the Qur'ān, included as an appendix to the *Al-Fauz-al-Kabīr.*

35. *Fath al-Wadūd-li-Mʿarifata-al-Junūd* (Arabic). The writer of these lines has not come across this work. Maulana Rahīm Bakhsh states in the *Hayāt-i-Wali* that it pertains to ethics and mysticism, although the name of the book does not confirm this view.

36. *Al-Fadhl al-Mubīn fi al-Musalsal Min Hadīthin Nabi al-Amīn* (Arabic). This work on *hadīth* has been printed and is also known as *Musalsalāt*.

37. *Al-Fauz al-Kabīr* (Persian). Already discussed in chapter five.

38. *Fuyūz al-Haramayn* (Arabic). The book contains autobiographical reminiscenes and a record of spiritual transports and attainments during the Shāh's stay in Hijāz alongwith certain scholastic and mystical discussions The work being meant for the learned would be found difficult of comprehension by those who are not well acquainted with philosophy and mysticism.

(Qāf)

39. *Qurrat al-ʿAynayn fi Tafdhīl al-Shaykhayn* (Persian) brings forward the evidences to prove the superiority of the first two caliphs, which has seen several reprints.

40. *Al-Qaul al-Jamīl fi Bayān-i-Sawā-is-Sabīl* (Arabic). In this work the Shāh has discussed the legality of *bayʿat*, traced the practice to the time of the Prophet and the causes leading to its falling into disuse in the subsequent period as well as the necessity of its revival. He goes on further to throw light on the qualities required of mystic guides and the initiates, the content and method of mystical guidance as well as the pre-requisites of an effective sermon. The Shāh has also given the practices, litanies, rules of recollection and contemplation prescribed by the Qādiriyah, Chishtiyah and Naqshbandiyah orders alongwith the invocations found efficacious by his forefathers for overcoming different sufferings and difficulties. In short, the book is a guidebook for the travellers on the path of spirit initiated in any one of the abovementioned mystical orders, provided they are willing to follow the path shown by the *sunnah*

of the holy Prophet.

The readers of the book will not find in it the logical and dialectical approach which characterises other important works of the Shāh. Rather, a few of the passages in this work are hardly in conformity with the Shāh's reformative attitude and scholarly style as, for instance, giving the names of the *Ashāb.i-Kahf* (the Seven Sleepers) he says that "these names of the *Ashāb-i-Kahf* are protection against being drowned, burnt or any type of unnatural death", although there is nothing to support this contention in any authentic *hadīth*.

The apparent reason for proffering such views is that this book was written by the Shāh before he set out for pilgrimage to the two holy cities in 1143/1731. He has given in it the names of his spiritual guides, their authorisations and mantles bestowed on him, but he does not say anything about his most esteemed mentor Shaikh Abu Tāhir Madani. In the *Al-Juz al-Latīf fi Tarjamata-al 'Abd al Dhayīf* on the contrary, he has written: "I was draped with the costume of mystics by Shaikh Abu Tāhir Madani which is more precious than the cloaks of all the mystics."[2] Similarly in enumerating his teachers of *hadīth* he speaks of his father Shāh 'Abdur Rahīm and Hāji Muhammad Afzal, but is silent about Shaikh Abu Tāhir and others from whom he studied the subject in Hijāz.[3]

Notwithstanding the shortcomings stated above, the Shāh's predilection for reform and renovation comes to the serface in different ways. He omits to mention the then prevalent *salāt-i-m'akūs* (inverted prayers) since there is nothing to support it in the *ahādīth* or the juristic opinions of the scholars. Another practice followed by the mystics of the time was to practise remembrance of God in a loud voice with the scripture placed alternatively in front and back and on the right and left sides. The Shāh has disapproved this method as being disrespectful to the Qur'ān. He has also questioned the authenticity of certain sayings attributed to the holy Prophet, cited by different mystical orders, to show that the Prophet recommended the customs and systems of *sulūk* (journey of spirit). His critical approach to

the issue is evinced by the passage extracted here from the *Shifa-al-'Alīl*:

> "I declare that one should not keep company of illiterate *sufis*, nor of illiterate men of piety, nor of the legists going by the letter of the law, nor of the scholastics who rely exclusively on their own reason and reject everything transmitted from the scholars of old. A seeker after truth ought to be a learned mystic, inclined to renunciation of wordly desires, always immersed in the remembrance of Allah and ever inclined to follow the practice of the Prophet as well as keen to learn more about *hadīth* and lives of the Prophet's companions. He ought to be desirous of being enlightened by legists predisposed to *hadīth* and by scholars who are not opinionated but place reliance on the *sunnah* in the matters of creed. He ought also to obtain the guidance of mystics who are learned as well as travellers on the path of spirit, neither given to laborious exercises nor making the religion hard by adding anything to the practice of the holy Prophet."[4]

The Shāh's inclination towards harmonization and reconciliation (which was his inherited trait) is evident in this work also. He did not favour giving preference to any one of the juristic schools over another and argued that the principles enunciated by all these schools should be accepted in principle but in the case of specific issues only the juristic opinion nearest to a well-known *sunnah* should be followed.[5]

Apart from the manuscripts of the book found at different places, it was first lethographed by the Al-Jamīliyah Press of Al-Haj Mansūr Muhammad of Egypt in 1290/1873 with an introduction and comments by Maulana Muhammad Sādiq of Madras. A copy of this edition, which was scribed by Abdul-'āl-Ahmad, is available in the Nadwatul 'Ulama Library. An Urdu translation of it was completed by Maulana Khurram 'Ali Bilhauri (d. 1271/1855) in 1260/1844 who writes in his foreword: "The

explanatory notes of the author's son and scholar, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, were augmented by me in the Urdu translation". The Urdu version was first published from Matb'a Darakhshāni in 1278/1861 and then reprinted by Matb'a Nizāmi of Kanpur in 1307/1889.

(Kāf)

41. *Kashf al-Ghain fi Sharh ir-Rub'āyatain* (Persian). It is a commentary on two *rubā'is* (quartains) of Khwāja Bāqi Billāh, published by the Mujtabāyi Press, Delhi in 1310/1892.

(Lām)

42. *Lam'āt* (Persian). The tract, since printed, is on *sufism*.

(Mīm)

43. *Al-Maqālatul Wadhiyata fi-Al-Nasīhata wal-Wasiyah* (Persian) Also known as the *Wasiyat Nāma* has been published several times. Qāzi Thanāullah Pānīpati had annotated the work in the light of the Shāh's *Irshād al-Tālibin*, which was published by Muti-ur-Rahman Press, Delhi in 1268/1852.

44. *Al-Muqaddamatus Saniyata fi-al-Intisār-i-lil Firaqatis Sunniyah* (Arabic). It is the Arabic rendering of the Shāh's *Radd-i-Rawāfidh* with certain additions and comments. Manuscripts of this work are available in the libraries of Tonk and Bhopal. It has been recently published from Delhi by Maulāna 'Abul Hasan Zayd Mujaddidi.[6]

45. *Al-Muqaddamat-o-fi-Qawānin al-Tarjumah* (Persian). This work has since been printed. It also forms part of the *Fath-ur-Rahmān*.

46. *Al-Musawwah min Ahādith al-Muwatta* (Arabic). A commentary on the *Muwatta* of Imām Mālik which has twice been brought out from Delhi and once from Makkah Mukarramah.

47. *Musaffa* (Persian). A commentary on Imām Mālik's *Muwatta* in Persian which shows his depth of knowledge and

insight into the science of *hadīth*. It was first published by Matb'a Farūqi, Delhi, and then reprinted by Matb'a Murtadhawi, Delhi in 1293/1876.

48. *Al-Maktūb al-Madanī* (Arabic). A letter written to Shaikh Ismā'il bin 'Abdullah Rūmi comparing the concepts of *wahdat-al-wajūd* (Unity of Being) and *wahdat-al-shahūd* (Unity of Manifestation). It forms part of the *Al-Tafhimāt-i-Ilāhiya* and has also been published separately.

49. *Maktūbāt m'a-i-Manāqib Imām Bukhāri wa Fazīlat-i-Ibn-Taymiyah* (Persian). The work brought out under this title by Maulvi 'Abdur Rauf of Nazīriah Library comprises two letters written by the Shāh acclaiming Imām Bukhāri and Hāfiz Ibn Taimiyah. It is also included in some of his other works.

(Nūn)

50. *An-Nabadatul Ibrīziyāh fil Latīfatil 'Azīziyah* (Persian). It has been brought out with the *Anfas-al-'Arifīn* as well as the *Majmu'a Khamsa Rasā'il* and gives a biographical account of Shaikh 'Abdul 'Azīz Dehlavi and his ancestors and descendants. Shaikh 'Abdul 'Azīz was he maternal great grandfather of the Shāh.

51. *An-Nawādiro min Ahādīth-i-Saiyid al-Awā'il wal-Awākhir* (Arabic). It has been published with the *Musalsalāt*.

(He)

52. *Hama'āt* (Persian). This work of sixty pages of average size and published by Tuhfah Muhammadiyah Press, is on the subject of sufism. "When Allah took it upon Himself to safeguard Islam and it became predominant over other religions", says Shāh Waliullah in his introduction to the book, "the incompatible and hostile characteristics of the Arab and non-Arab temperament vanished completely. Islam has an external as well as an internal aspect. The exterior is related to its form and appearance, the timings (of rituals) and its structure and composition. All these have been protected and can be relied upon to close the door of deviations. The internal or the

intrinsic feature relates to illumination and attainment of spiritual sublimity which, in turn, depends on two things. The external form has been bequeathed to the successors of the Prophet who have protected the *sharīa*. They include the jurists, scholars of *hadīth*, fighters for the cause of God and the reciters of the Qur'ān. The esoteric aspect of Islam also known as *ihsān* (purification of heart) is watched over by those whose hearts are illuminated, have a living awareness of its sublime nature, are virtuous in their deeds and are admirable in their behaviour. These (*sufis*) have always had an intuition of spiritual exercises suitable for the people of their times. God has blessed their companionship and speech with effectiveness, made their hearts pure and illuminated and given them miraculous powers. Different mystic orders have prescribed their own spiritual exercises and litanies which have helped those initiated in those orders to advance on the path of spirit. The followers of various mystic orders prefer their own order over others and this may be correct to an extent because of their peculiarities, but it would be wrong to regard the excellence of any order as absolute and all-inclusive."

The Shāh has given a history of different mystical orders, their founders and the transformations undergone by them from time to time since the days of the holy Prophet, in the exercises undertaken for attaining spiritual perfection. His description throws profound light on the development of mysticism. He has discussed *wahdat-al-wajūd* (Unity of Being) as propounded by the Shaikh Akbar Muhi-ud-din al-'Arabi (560-638/1165-1240) and traced the development of sufism since its greatest pioneer Junaid of Baghdad (d.298/910) who had systematized the discipline. The Shāh has enumerated the basic requisites and mainstays of the travellers on the path of spirit, considered essential by Shaikh Junaid, and thereafter given the revised procedures and exercises prescribed by subsequent renewers of the discipline in view of the changed conditions and temperaments of the people in their own times. The Shāh has outlined the practices he considered necessary for spiritual training during his own time

and the things that need to be given attention or avoided. Like a physician he gives the reasons for different exercises being helpful or injurious to the initiates and suggests the corrective measures as well as the different states and stations that a traveller may happen to attain in his journey of spirit. The spirituality of the holy Prophet's companions, their successors, and the pious of old has been spoken of by the Shāh as *ihsān*. He also describes the differing capabilities of the people and the function of man's *latā'if* (namely, the body, mind and will) for spiritual ascent.

The intricate and subtle aspects of mysticism discussed by the Shāh in this work mark him out as an expert physician in the spiritual field.

53. *Hawām'e Sharh-i-Hizb al-Bahr (Persian).* The book has since been published.

Notes and References :

1. The Shah's views expressed in this book about the power of clairvoyance in the graves is not in accord with what he has written *in Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha, Tafhimāt-i-Ilāhiya* and *Al-Fauz al-Kabīr*, although there is room for its different interpretation. (see *Hifzal-Imān* by Maulana Ashraf Ali Thānwi). Nevertheless these views of doubtful validity, though supported by the experiences of certain mystics, can mislead others. Imām Mālik had *once* pointing out to the grave of the holy Prophet remarked : "Something can be accepted or rejected from the sayings of every man, save those of the one who is burried here".
2. *Al-Juz-al-Latīf*, p. 5, Maktaba Salfiyah, Lahore.
3. Dr. Mazhar Baqa writes in the *Usūl Fiqh aur Shāh Waliullah* (Adāra Tahqiqāt-i-Islāmi, Islāmābād, Pakistan) that this book was written after the Shāh returned from Hijāz but this is a conjecture not supported by the circumstantial and internal evidences, mentioned above, which clearly indicate that the book was written by the Shāh during the period between his father's death in 1131/1719 and the journey undertaken for *haj* in 1143/1731, when he acted as the spiritual guide of his father's disciples.

 The Nadwatul 'Ulama Library has two old manuscripts of the *Al-Qaulal-Jamīl*. One of it was copied by Syed Qutb-ul-Huda Hasani

(d. 1226/1811) who was an eminent disciple of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. It was acquired from the personal library of Maulana Hakīm Saiyid 'Abdul Hai. The other manuscript formerly belonged to the personal collection of Nawāb Saiyid Siddīq Hasan Khan.

4. *Shafā al-'Alil*, pp. 116-17
5. *Shafā al-'Alīl*, p. 117.
6. The Shāh rendered this work into Arabic at the instance of his mentor Shaikh Abu Tāhir Madani in 1144/1731 while he was in Hijaz.

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